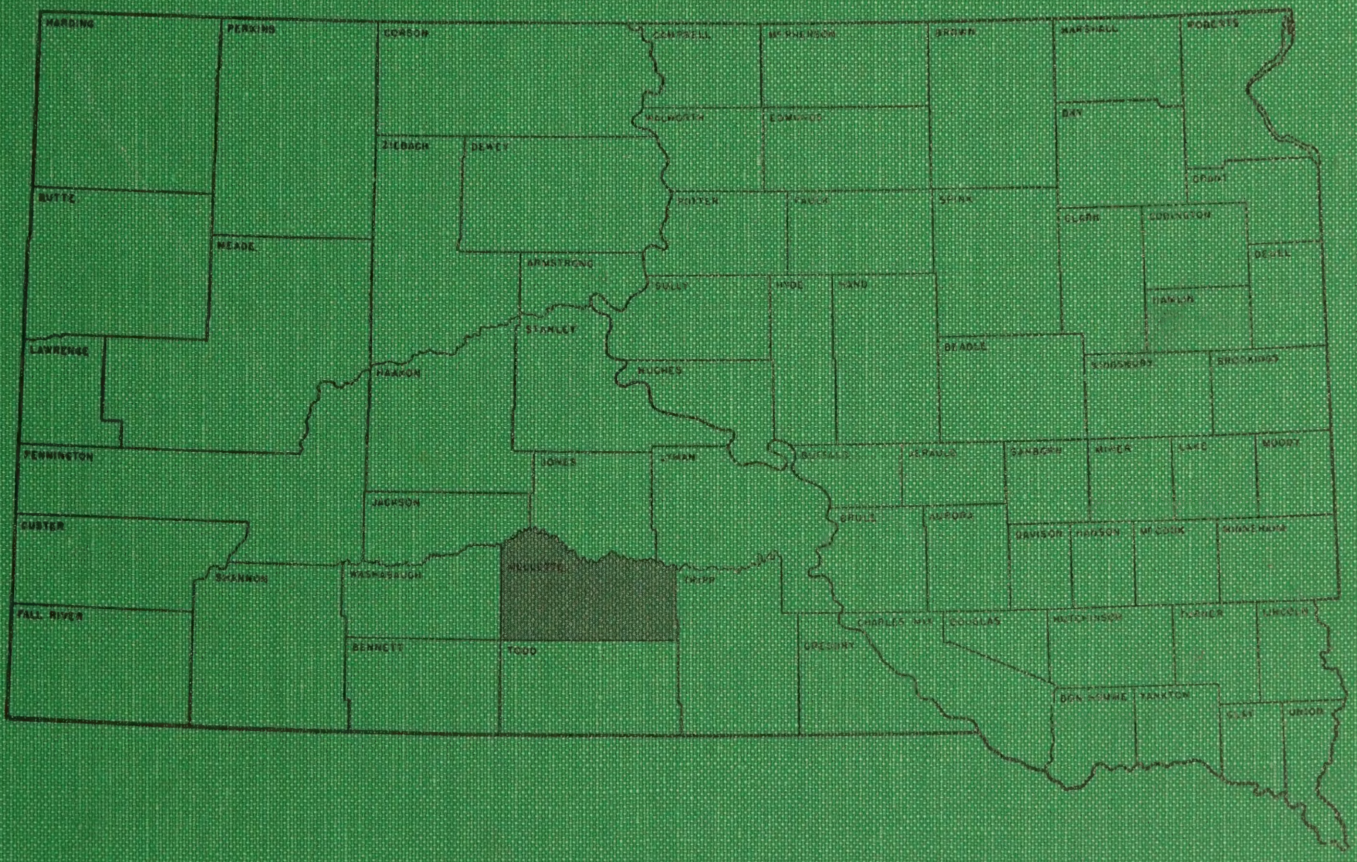
# Early Dakota Days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Many more Happy Days
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# *Dedication*

This book, "EARLY DAKOTA DAYS," is dedicated to my husband, Paul . . . and to the wonderful people who shared their stories and pictures with me for use in this book. Their names are to be found on every page.

This book is Americana at its best . . . authentic pictures and true stories direct from the pioneers themselves. It is an heirloom; take care of it.

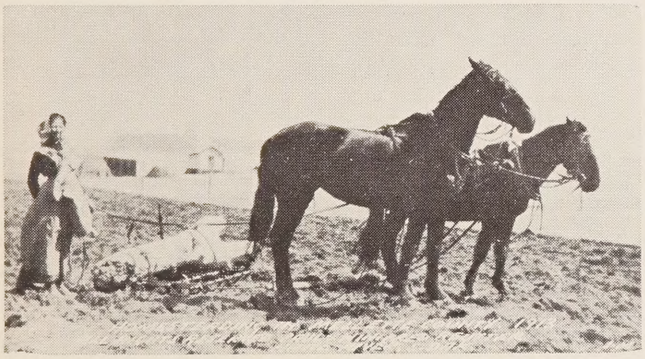
As you read it, you will appreciate the courage, humor and resourcefulness of our Dakota people.

WINIFRED REUTTER
1927 "Prairie Poetry"
1961 "Mellette County Memories"
1962 "Early Dakota Days"

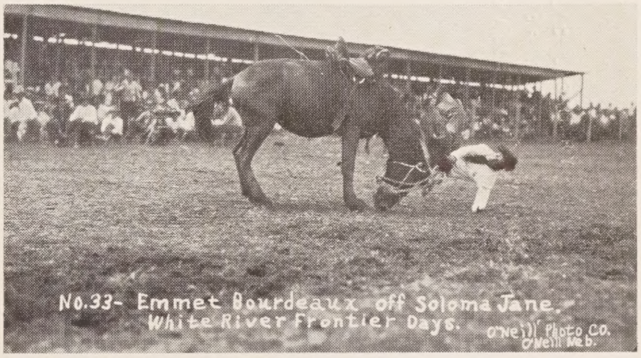
# *Early Dakota Days*

STORIES AND PICTURES
of

PIONEERS



COWBOYS


No.33- Emmet Bourdeaux off Soloma Jane.
White River Frontier Days.
O'Neill Photo Co.
O'Neill Neb.

INDIANS

INDIAN VILLAGE WHITE RIVER S.D.

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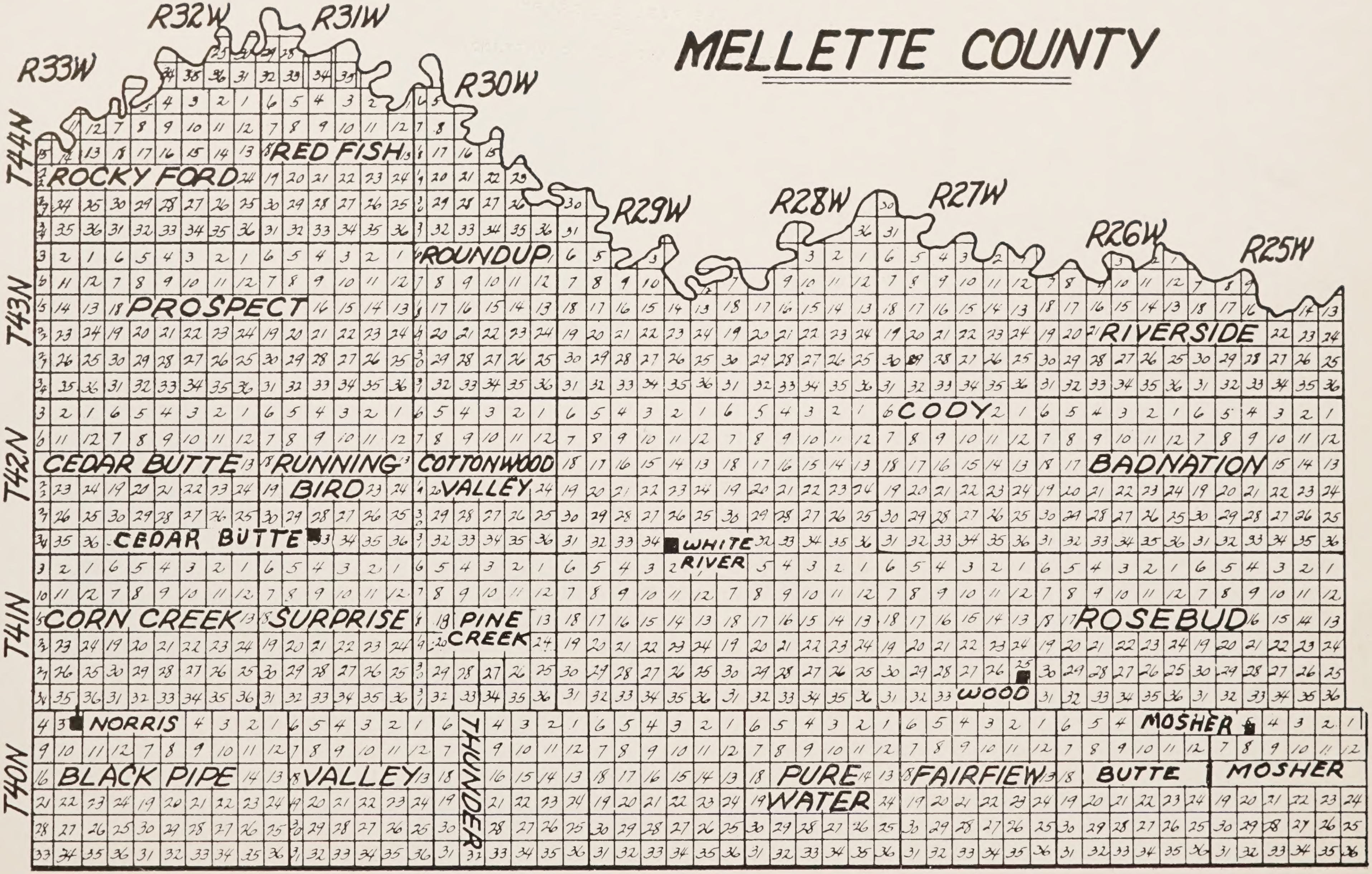
# MELLETTE COUNTY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COTTONWOOD VALLEY
BADNATION
CEDAR BUTTE
WHITE RIVER
CORN CREEK
SURPRISE
PINE CREEK
ROSEBUD
WOOD
NORRIS
MOSHER
BLACK PIPE
VALLEY
THUNDER
PURE WATER
FAIRFIEW
BUTTE
MOSHER

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# *Early Dakota Days*

## PIONEER STORIES

The Pioneer Stories on the following pages were most of them written by the pioneers themselves, and edited by me (that means I took your errors out and put mine in!). If you enjoy reading these stories, why not tell the writers so? Names and 1961 addresses available upon request.

—WINIFRED REUTTER

For Map of Mellette County, see Page 2 of book.

**M. H. Richards Homestead Shack. Moved two miles east, but still standing in 1962.**

### THE ABANDONED HOMESTEAD SHACK

Sleep well, Old House, your work is done,
You've sheltered us from sun to sun.
Here we came weary from work or play
To your protecting arms at close of day,
You were pioneer-built by loving hands . . .
Room by room . . . on prairie lands.
To the new house they've gone today
And the new walls ring with laughter gay.
Alive with memories, though but an empty shell . . .
Rest, Old House, you deserve it well.
Winifred Reutter
(Printed in Pasque Petals)

# History of the H. E. Cattle Company

**By Mrs. Earl Adrian**

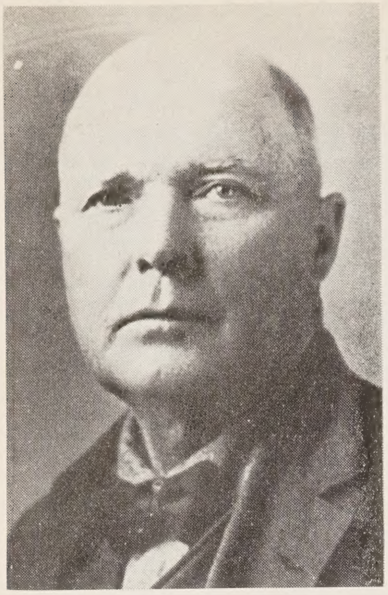
One of the famous cattle companies that ran cattle in this area before homesteading days was the H. E. Cattle Company.

This company operated in what is now Todd and Mellette Counties. The exact boundaries of their range are rather vague, but we know that their headquarters were located on what is now the headquarters in Mellette County of the Earl Adrian ranch—S 24, 40-31. Headquarters for the H. E. Cattle Company consisted of a log house, log barn and pole corrals.

There, close to a good spring of water that flowed the year round and with plenty of timber for firewood, it was an ideal location to take care of cattle. They also had several line camps. One was west of Soldier Creek in Todd County about where the William Meyer place is now. Another was at the mouth of Cutmeat Creek on the little White River, close to the old M. I. Strain place. They also had a camp down close to the Nebraska line and one up north on Blackpipe Creek. In the winter one rider would stay at each camp. He would have a couple of good saddle horses so he could change off and ride a fresh horse each day. During one day he would ride several miles out from camp turning back toward the home range any H. E. cattle he might find. The next day he would ride "line" in the opposite direction and check the cattle there in the same manner. He was expected to ride every day regardless of weather.

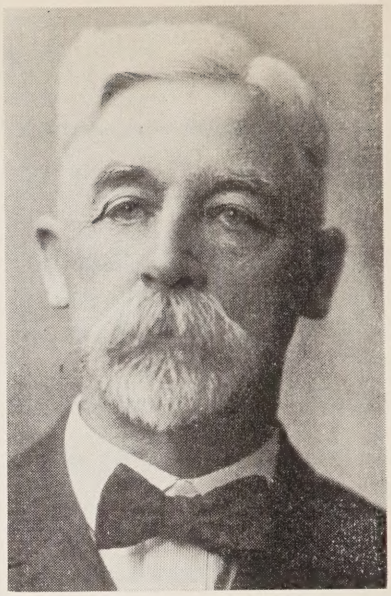
The H. E. Cattle Company was formed when three prominent business men: J. H. Quigley, C. H. Cornell and Dave W. Parmelee pooled their resources to form one of the largest cattle companies of this area. C. H. Cornell was a banker from Valentine, Nebr. D. W. Parmelee owned and operated a general merchandise store at the Cutmeat Issue Station. Later the town of Parmelee was named after him. J. H. Quigley was a trail driver from Texas, and a son Bryan Quigley is now an attorney at Valentine, Nebr. It was Mr. Quigley's duty to go down into New and Old Mexico to buy steers. These were shipped by railroad to Kilgore and Cody, Nebr.

Sam Yellow Robe, who still lives in Mellette County along the little White River, rode for the H. E. Cattle Company from 1907 until they went out of business in 1911 when the government decided to open the land for homesteaders. Sam furnished many of the pictures and much of the information for this story.



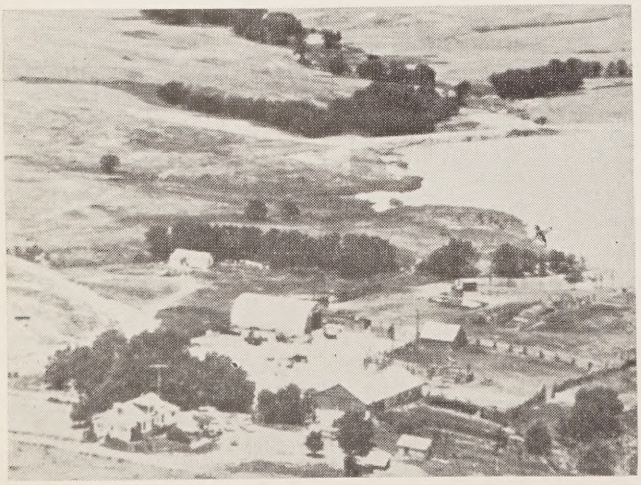
J. H. Quigley, Father of Bryan Quigley, Valentine.

D. W. Parmelee, when he was manager of the Cut Meat Store. Later, the town was renamed Parmelee in his honor.



C. H. Cornell, Banker from Valentine, Nebr.

Quite a number of cowboys worked through the summer months but when winter came the big cattle companies kept on only twelve or fifteen of their best men. The other men usually rode the "grub line," that is, they rode from one camp to another and did odd jobs for their board. It was usually their duty to see that the wood box was kept full of wood for the cook, or any other work that needed an extra hand. They were welcome to put their horses in with those belonging to the regular cowboys. Soon they would ride on to another camp. Sam Yellow Robe proudly remembered that he always had a steady job for the full year. He recalled one year when the H. E. Cattle Company shipped about two thousand head of steers to Cody, Nebr. Their men were camped along the Nebraska line, so they went to the railroad and drove the cattle north until they were just south of Stamford, S. D. They put them next to the T. L. pasture. This was "Hans" Thode's cattle brand. The H. E. outfit had a line camp there on Roundup Creek close to Stamford that they called their T. L. camp. Throughout that winter Sam stayed at this camp and kept driving the steers north whenever necessary to keep them on that range.



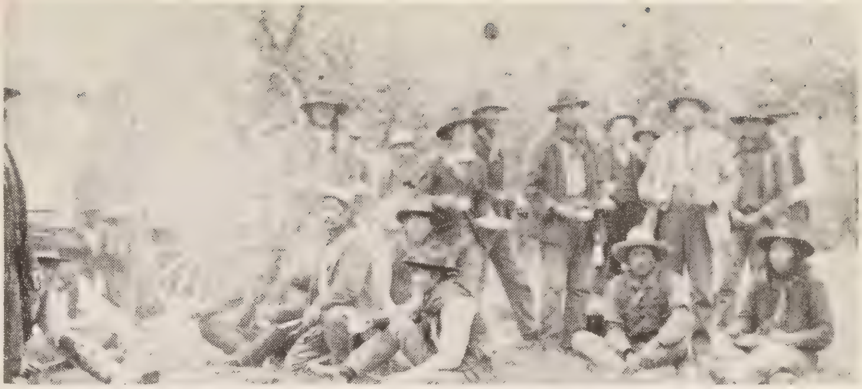
Earl Adrian Ranch. X in dam marks watering spot of old HE Cattle Company.

In those days cattle weren't sold until they were quite heavy. Consequently no steers were sold until they were four or five years old. Some of the steers got to be ten or twelve years old and had huge horns. These older ones became harder each year to round up because they had gotten away before and were ready to break away at the first chance. When the cattle were ready for market they were rounded up and driven to Kilgore, Nebr., and in later years to Belvidere, S. D. Sam remembers shipping some out of Murdo after the railroad was built through there. They shipped the cattle from these shipping points to Chicago to be sold. Chicago had the largest cattle market in the world at that time.

Sometimes the government bought steers from the cattle companies. These were to be issued to the Indians at the various Indian issue stations on the Rosebud and other reservations. Bryan Quigley remembers hearing his father and the late Jack Whipple, who used to live at Parmelee, tell many stories of their experiences in delivering steers to various places. One time they drove a bunch to the Sioux Indians at Yankton, S. D. They tried to make the cattle swim across the Missouri River but as soon as they got about half way across and were hit by the swift current the cattle would turn back. Finally they cut huge cottonwood logs and tied them together to make a boom across the river. This broke the force of the current somewhat, and it also seemed to give the cattle courage enough to swim beside it across the wide stream.

Each cowboy who went to represent his boss' outfit with the round-up was called a "Rep." He would bring his own saddle horses along and had twelve or more head. He would have his bed roll tied on one horse. While the cowboys were on the round-up all the horses were thrown together but it is the habit of horses to stay with their own herd, so in order to make it easier for the cowboy working as night-hawk or night-rider, men would put a bell on one horse in his string of horses.

The cowboys took great pride in the different bells they chose. Some of them had Swiss bells with a tinkle that had such a pretty tone and others had cowbells.



**Dinner time on Parmelee Round-Up Wagon.** Left to right: Alex Bordeaux; man by hoop, Standing Elk; man by wheel, Ed Estes; next one kneeling, Louie Guereaux; sitting down, Louie Bear Heels; right above, John Bordeaux; right above, George Menard; standing, Silacal Roubideaux; next, Joe White Buffalo; next, Fred Big Horse, Parmelee; sitting, George Pony, Blue Thunder. End, sitting, Alex Turning Hawk; white coat, Isaac Battleyon; next, Yellow Eyes; last, Caton & Son, Boss Farmer, Cut Meat.

Just as it was breaking day the night-hawk drove the herd or cavvy as it was called, into a rope corral. This was a special rope that was kept looped up on the bed wagon when they were moving. When it was to be used it would be strung out in a square from the wagon. Four stakes were driven into the ground to hold up the other three corners of this rope, cavvy corral.

The men that herded horses in the daytime were called wranglers. Each rider would go in and catch the horses that he needed for the day's work. He generally chose his toughest horse, one that was a good loper, for the early morning riding. Breakfast was served by the camp cook at the chuck wagon around 4 a. m. Then the cowboys saddled up their horses and rode out to round up the herd of cattle that were to be worked that day. (Working the cattle meant that each Rep would cut out the cattle belonging to his outfit and head them back in the general direction of their home range. Sometimes branding was done at this time. W. R.)

**H. E. Round-Up Wagon. Sam Yellow Robe sitting in stove trailer, hanging feet out. Picture taken before 1911.**

By 10 a. m. the cowboys were riding in for dinner and a change of horses. Part of the men would ride around to hold the cattle while the others ate. These were exciting times working the milling, bawling big herds of cattle. Now the cowboys would use their cutting horses to cut out the cattle they wanted. They generally finished the days work about 4 p. m. or later and were ready for their supper. Then they could hit their bed rolls for a sleep under the skies—all except the rider who stood first guard and the night-hawk. This first guard was relieved after two hours by another one of the cowboys taking their turns on the night shift. And two hours later another man would take his turn riding herd to guard the cattle, and so on through the night. Sometimes, when the cattle were restless, as during a storm, all hands had to help.

During the round-ups in the spring the main work was gathering and branding calves and even though the H. E. outfit kept only steers they sent Reps to each round-up wagon and there were six wagons on the Rosebud reservation. They also sent men to ride with the Pine Ridge wagon to the southwest and to the T. L. outfit to the northwest to pick up strays.

After the branding season there was a lull in the heavy work for the riders except the line riders. So in this time before the beef round-up the cowboys would break saddle horses to ride and train them. The "bronc peelers" would ride them enough to take the rough edge off, then the other riders rode them each day until they were fit for use in the regular cattle round-ups. There were many exciting experiences had when horses were broken to ride. The cowboys had their own rodeos every day.

The only hay that was fed during the winter was to the saddle horses. A separate crew was hired to mow the hay and put it up. During winters when there was a lot of snow many cattle starved to death. This was the advantage of raising steers, they were stronger and would stand the winters without extra feed better than cows.

Sam Yellow Robe recalls some of the other riders who worked for the H. E. Cattle Company. They were Mark Kills the Enemy, Joe Yellow Robe, Nels Anderson (cook there for several years), Henry McGrath and Chas Larison (now of Belvidere).

With the drop in cattle prices and settlers moving in on their range ground, the H. E. Cattle Company finally dissolved partnership in 1910. They sold part of their horses to the Indians and Sam Yellow Robe helped take the rest to a pasture south of Cody, Nebr., on the Snake River. There they were kept until they were in good shape and then shipped east to the New York market. They hired Reps to go with the various wagons

**Albert Nelson of Nelson Bros. Cattle Outfit. Paul Copsey, foreman. Depot at back indicates that cattle delivery was probably just over.**

Adrian Ranch Headquarters in 1961

throughout 1911 to pick any stray cattle of theirs that they might have overlooked. Sam Yellow Robe was sent to the Pine Ridge outfit to work with a Wyoming wagon and the strays that the Reps found were shipped out of Belvidere, to Chicago.

From 1910 until 1920, when Earl Adrian bought the H. E. headquarters, various cattle outfits used the spring for their cattle. The Nelson Bros., who ran the Circle N brand, and later located in Todd County, headquartered there for a few years. From some of the land abstracts that Earl Adrian later acquired we find that Nelsons owned some of the land in the pasture for a while. After it was purchased in 1920 a man by the name of Stewart ran his horse and cattle herd in this part of the country. He hired John Marty, of St. Francis, to put down a well close to the four room Indian house that the government built for the Eagleside family in 1913. This well proved to be a good one and is still in use.

In 1933 Earl and Bess Adrian moved to this home with their four year old daughter, Helen Marie. Their four sons; Robert, Dean, William and Richard were born there within the next six years, so, Adrians decided that Mellette County was the best place to live and rear cowboys. They still live at the old H. E. headquarters location.

Mr. and Mrs. Earl Adrian and Sons, Dick, Bill and Dean, June 17, 1961.

# Pioneering With the John Allards

By Mrs. Russell Allard

John Allard and Elva Searby were married in the Searby home, north of Crookston, Nebr., in the spring of 1916. They spent their first year of married life at St. Francis, S. D., working for Elva's Uncle, Will Searby.

In the spring of 1917, while still employed by Uncle Will, they moved to a place which is still known as the Searby quarter. It is about five miles south and two miles west of Norris, S. D. They brought a herd of cattle to care for and hauled their belongings in a freight wagon. Elva drove the team on the wagon, while John, on horseback, drove the cattle. Uncle Will and his wife accompanied them on the trip, but returned to their own home as soon as they had the young couple settled in a tent which was to be their new home. Most of the cooking was done over a camp fire, although they may have had a small stove with no oven.

In the fall of 1916, a prairie fire had burned from Wanblee, S. D., to the Niobrara River near Valentine, Nebr., so grazing was scarce for the cattle. As there were no fences, someone had to be riding almost constantly, to keep the cattle from wandering too far to graze. In his work of building fences, John was assisted by his Indian neighbors, Tom and Fred Two Sticks and Jim Bear Shield. The later is still living near the Searby place.

The following spring, 1918, John and Elva moved about two miles north to the place where they now live. John had purchased it previously, during a freighting trip with Elva's father. Here they set up housekeeping in style—in a larger tent with walls. They also had a large wood-burning range with an oven, so Elva could bake. Their other household furniture consisted of a table, chairs, a bed and a dresser.

One night a strong wind blew the tent down. In those days, they didn't have fast-rising yeast. The bread was usually mixed up in the evening and allowed to rise overnight. Elva had bread sponge mixed up, and when the tent began to topple, she quickly pushed the pan of bread dough underneath the stove to save it. Then she returned to bed and they just left the tent down over them until morning.

They lived in the big tent through the summer while John erected the frame of a two room house. (Years later, a third room was added.) They moved into it when winter came. It was unfinished inside and they saved newspapers, magazines and pieces of cardboard, to nail up for insulation. When they did lath and plaster the walls they left the papers on and they were the only insulation used.

Previous to his marriage, John had been freighting with Elva's father, Ed Searby, hauling to and from Rosebud, Mission and even farther. He had a big freight wagon to which he hitched six horses, four abreast in front of the wagon and two abreast in front of the four. Often he led four other horses behind so he could change them off.

He freighted the first grain that was grown near Wanamaker, S. D., to Crookston and Cody, Nebr. It was flax seed, and, although they sacked some of it and put the sacks on top of the load to hold it in the wagon, at each hill and valley he crossed, the load of flax would roll and slide from one end of the wagon to the other. He also hauled groceries, coal and other supplies from the railroad to Norris, S. D. There were no bridges across the White River yet. Everyone had to either ford the river or be ferried across on rafts. One spring the river rose so high from rains and melting snow that nothing could get across for a long time, except the mail, which they sent across by means of a cable. The store ran out of many things including bread and flour. Elva recalls that for several days they had nothing to eat but canned goods and that they didn't go so well without bread or potatoes.

Later, when other settlers moved into the community, John freighted for them, too. Among other things, he hauled the lumber for Louie Reynold's house and for Terkeldsen's barn. One night, while he was hauling the lumber for the barn, he and a companion, camped near a lake north of Cody, Nebr. All night long, the ice on the lake popped and cracked, causing them to wonder what was happening.

When they arrived at Cody, Nebr., the next morning they found out that it had been 40 degrees below zero in the night. They had been snug in their tent and had no idea it was so cold.

On July 3, John was hauling a load of ice for a Fourth of July celebration. Somehow he slipped and a wagon wheel ran over his big toe, crushing it badly. To this day, small pieces of bone occasionally work out of his toe.

A freighting trip usually took four or five days, and Elva recalls times when she nearly ran out of food and fuel before John returned. She would sit close to the open oven door, holding the baby on her lap, trying to keep warm. Once she had only some frozen, green logs for fuel. She says they split pretty good but didn't burn very well or give much heat but it was all she had left.

John built the first graded road through Norris. He used a grader drawn by eight horses, hitched four abreast. The grade extended from the north end of main street in Norris to the Cemetery corner, about one half mile south and four miles east of the corner.

Ever so often when John was away on a freighting trip, some Indian boys would come along on their way to town, and would ride around and around the house, whooping and yelling as they rode. One night, John had loaded the freight wagons at a neighbors and left them there while he rode back home for the night before starting a trip. The boys rode by, seeing no wagons, they supposed John was away and began their usual pranks. John stepped out and fired his shot gun into the air over their heads. They took off as fast as their horses could gallop and never again tried that trick.

Once when Elva was away, visiting her family for a few days, a young fellow named Russell Hardy, who was working for John, had the cook's job. John was out riding all day without any dinner. When he came home, Russell had an enormous batch of chocolate pudding for supper—nothing else. John was so hungry he ate too much and it made him sick. He still doesn't care for chocolate pudding.

Another time John and Elva were driving their car home. It had carbide lights but the carbide had leaked out so they were driving in the dark. All at once, one side of the front end dropped down. Certain that they had run a wheel off and as they were only four or five miles from home, they got out and started walking. John decided to go back and see just what he would need to bring back to fix it. Upon striking a match and looking, he discovered that he had merely run the wheel into a washout. So they got it out and drove on home.

Dick Larvie and Ben Gerry, Indian neighbors, each had a large herd of horses. Elva recalls how beautiful they were. (I personally recall a large band of horses owned by the Whipples in the 1930s. There were few fences then and the horses roamed around, often coming to water at a dam near our house. Those horses were beautiful, but most striking was the stallion who left hoofprints as big as dinner plates. I know they were that large, because one time, after the band had gone, my brothers and I measured his tracks with one of Mom's plates. Maxine Allard.)

John recalls that once when they were on a big round-up, a lady named Mrs. Wagner made a wash tub full of jello. Things were done in a big way those days.

One night, John rode in home, cared for his horse and went inside. A cowboy, Sol Ingram asked, "Did you see my ponies?" He had bought two unbroken wild spotted horses from Dick Larvie and had them in the corral. Next morning, when they went to look at them Sol asked, "Which one are you going to ride?" John replied, "Whichever one you don't." Whereupon, Sol took his rope and roped one. They tied it down, saddled it and Sol got on and stayed on. Not to be outdone, John rode the other one.

John and Elva had seven children; Gladys, Russell, Doris, Jeanette, Dean, Ilene and Beverly. As in all families the children were the source of many amusing incidents. Once when company came, Gladys was sitting on an overturned tub in the yard. She stayed there too. When the other children asked her why she didn't come and play, she answered, "I don't dare. Russell will get out if I do!" Sure enough, Russell was under the tub. Another time, Doris went crying to her mother saying that Russell had broken her toy broom. Investigation showed that he had broken it by having too hard a head, when she hit him with it! Still another time, when Russell was four or five years old, the family was on the way to attend a neighborhood dance and get together at Alex Whipples. They had an open car and Russell was napping on the back ledge. The car bounced, crossing a washout, and Russell fell out. When they missed him a few minutes later and looked back, there he was some distance behind, running for all he was worth trying to catch up.

In the days of kerosene lamps, a "Ray-o" lamp was superior as far as light-giving was concerned. Elva had one, but she vividly recalls one occasion when it's extra light wasn't worth the trouble it caused. She had lit it before going out to help John milk. Although she was gone only a short time, the lamp flame flared up and the house was filled with thick, black, sooty, greasy smoke which clung to everything.

Space prohibits the relating of many other events in the lives of this couple. They now live in a much larger house which they moved from Crookston, Nebr., in 1942 or 1943. The old house still stands, in good shape, now being used for a store house and occasionally as an extra sleeping room, when a return of all the children and their families fills the new house and overflows into the old one. John still rides and cares for his cattle, although he admits that there are some things which he can no longer do around the ranch. Once he felt he could always do them. Elva is bothered by arthritis and diabetes, but manages her own housework and other duties. Life has had it's ups and downs, but they recall the "ups" more than the "downs" and it has be a good, rewarding life as a whole.

# Andersons' Adventures

**By Mr. and Mrs. Martin Anderson**

Martin Anderson tells this story; it was on Thanksgiving morning in 1918, about 3 a. m. when I harnessed my four head of horses, hitched them to the wagon four abreast, and started for Stamford. My place was located 15 miles northwest of White River and is now owned by Oswald Jarl.

It was about 20 miles to the Big White River. We had to go across country following the Indian trails. When I came to the river it was frozen over but I could see that other wagons had crossed safely over the ice, so I drove down the bank and also crossed on the ice. It was seven miles up to Stamford. So I drove there, bought some steel posts and wire that I needed, fed myself and my horses and then started back.

By this time the weather had changed and it was much warmer. When I got back to the river there was at least three inches of water running over the ice. There was no way to go around so I took a chance and drove out on the ice. I got along fine until I got into the middle of the river then the wagon broke through the ice. The horses could not pull it out. I had to unload all those steel posts and wire (4,000 pounds) and carry them all ashore. Still the horses couldn't pull the wagon out. Next I took off the wagon box and dragged it ashore. I tried again, but because the horses were on the ice with no footing and the wagon had settled into the quick sand, they still couldn't move it. I had to take the wagon apart, piece by piece, wheel by wheel. By this time the sand had settled around the wheels until they were almost solid.

By now it was midnight and cold. My clothes were wet. I had to put the wagon together, load up again and start home. I drove about two miles and found an abandoned barn so I stopped there. Luckily there was some hay so the horses were fed and I slept in the barn until morning.

When I got home the next day about 5 o'clock my wife didn't recognize either me or the horses. We had been through too much on this trip.

Hazel Anderson tells this story; I used to go to Cedar Butte to get our mail and buy groceries. It was about seven miles via Indian trails as there were no highways at that time. One afternoon I left our place enroute to Cedar Butte. There were about six barbed wire gates to open, drive through and close. (This was after the country was fenced.)

I stopped at Philip Bensons' a while, then went on to the store. There I got my mail and in it was a large box from Sears and Roebuck. I also got my box of groceries, cream can and a can of kerosene. My buggy was a small one-seated affair so, by the time I got loaded, it was pretty full.

The team of horses I was driving were very frisky.

I drove through two of the gates safely but when I got to the Claude Berry gate the horses didn't stop when I said "Whoa." Instead of stopping, they ran away.

I tried to run after them to catch the back of the buggy but it was hopeless. They ran so close to the fence that the hub of the buggy wheel seemed to hit every post along the way. Soon they disappeared over the hill. By this time I was nearly frantic because my little four year old girl was asleep on the buggy seat when the horses ran off.

Soon I came over the hill and there was my little girl lying on the ground, screaming of course, but seemingly unhurt.

By now I didn't care any more about the horses. I went back along the run-away route gathering up my cream can, scattered groceries and other things. I hid them behind thistles along the fence, then I started home afoot. After walking quite a long ways I found the horses standing by the next gate. The horses were still hooked to what was left of the buggy by one tug. So I tied up what was left of the reins, put my little girl on old Prince and home we went. By this time it was dark and night had come. Later Martin went back over the trail and gathered what was left of it all.

In the winter of 1930 we had a lot of snow. There were large drifts that filled every low place and the prairie was covered with hard crusted snow. One Friday afternoon, I was getting anxious to have my children, who were away to school, home with us.

My husband, Martin, said that the only way possible to go get them would be on horseback. As it was getting late he said he wouldn't try to go after them until the next day. All evening I felt uneasy about them.

They stayed at a neighbors, nearer the school house, during the school week so Martin thought they would be there this evening.

About 9 o'clock that evening we heard a noise as if someone was sort of stumbling—and there were our two children, almost frozen. They had not had any supper.

Their teacher, Mrs. Redman, had told them to be sure and go over to those neighbors where they had been staying. This the children did. When they arrived there they were told that it would cost them extra to stay there over the week-end so the kids walked back to the school house. Then those two children started to walk the nearly five miles to our place. Phyllis was so cold she cried, so Chester, who happened to have two pair of overalls on, took off one pair and put them on Phyllis. That helped keep out some of the cold. Girls didn't wear overalls or jeans to school in those days as they do now.

If you know where the Running Bird school is, then you know how far those children walked across the snow drifts on that cold night. It was a wonder that those two children ever found their way home and arrived safely.

Mistakes are made
By the foolish and the wise
Only he, who can do better,
Has the right to criticize. W. R.

# Life Along the Big White River

**By Nona Anderson**

I was born in Barton County, Mo., February 2, 1886, and was reared only a few miles from where ex-president Truman was born. My parents, three sisters, two brothers and myself moved to Omaha, Nebr., April 1, 1900.

I came to South Dakota in the spring of 1904. I drove a moving wagon and my father, N. P. Andrews drove another. My youngest brother Roy, and youngest sister Nellie were with us. It took us eighteen days to make the trip from Omaha, Nebr., to father's homestead ten miles south of Vivian, S. D. We came by way of Sioux City, Mitchell, and Chamberlain. The only way to cross the Missouri River at that time was by ferry boat or pontoon bridge.

We arrived at the homestead on Sunday May 29, at 3 p. m. His claim shack was built on the east bank of Williams Creek. It was an eight by ten building with no windows or floors and only a shed door. We put up our tent. It was 10 x 14 with two-foot side walls. We staked it down good, moved our beds and numerous articles in that afternoon. I cooked on our camp stove for two weeks.

On June 4 it started to drizzle and rain, and some sleet fell. It was that cold.

It was two miles to the nearest water for the horses and we hauled water from the Big White River for drinking and cooking. We hauled it in four barrels in the wagon. It was a 20 mile trip there and back and I surely learned to save on water. We had only one rain all that summer and that put three feet of water in a dam three miles below us, in the creek. It was the hottest and driest summer that I have seen here except in 1934 and 1936. The fleas were so bad, they made people uncomfortable day and night.

We had a young Collie dog that was a big help in keeping the range cattle away from our shack and tent.

The fall of 1904, Father and I dug a basement, built a 12 x 16 house over it and moved the claim shack up to join it. We built a part basement barn for the horses. Father put up hay on shares with a sheep owner, four or five miles away and hauled it home.

The winter of 1904—1905 was the coldest I've seen here. It was 49 below zero at Pierre and 45 below at Mitchell, officially. Father hauled dry wood from the Big White River for fuel.

The year 1905 was the wettest year. The Big White River was out of it's banks and flooded several bottom ranches. Mail service was poor and we had to go a long distance to get it.

In the spring of 1906, I was married to Albert Anderson. He had a ranch on White River, nine miles from father's homestead.

We lived on this ranch nearly 25 years and our three children, Gladys, Irene and Albert, Jr., grew up there, We lost our home in the financial crash of 1929, moving across the river into Mellette County where I have lived ever since.

Mr. Anderson had a light stroke in May, of 1942, and our son, Albert, went into the Service in July of that year. The two girls were in the western part of the state, so that left me alone, to try to do everything. That was sure a long 38 months that our son was in the army. I could not have made it without the help of good neighbors. Mr. Anderson died May 5, 1950. My son and I live on the ranch that he has acquired, since getting out of the service, two miles west of the Vivian bridge.

# Our Life in Mellette County

**By Mrs. C. W. Astleford**

We, Mr. and Mrs. C. W. Astleford, lived in Plymouth County, Ia., from 1901 to 1909. Then we bought eighty acres adjoining Murdo where we lived for five years. Next we moved to Mellette County and have lived there from then on.

We had a homestead south of the Big White River. We built a shack there, 14 x 20 foot. We found plenty of fuel to burn, we had wood and old trees all over the place. That seemed good to us after buying and burning coal at Murdo. Also, we now had good water and that was a great help.

Murdo was our closest town so we had to haul lumber and everything down and across the Big White River. Sometimes when we came to the crossing the river was up so we did not always make it to town just when we wanted to. We raised potatoes, lots of watermelons and muskmelons, also had good gardens and lots of pretty flowers.

Our family consisted of five children when we came to Murdo, but later grew to twelve. One boy, Howard, we lost on our claim here in an accident.

One time, my husband crossed the Big White River in a high wheeled buggy. He put his hundred pound sack of sugar on the seat because the river was high that day. He found out, after getting across, that the water had come up to the lower part of the sack and it was wet on the under side. He was driving one big horse, Pete, and a pony Bess. The big horse was on the upstream side or he never would have made it, as the water came up over their backs at times.

We had a small herd of cattle and they were a great help. At times the children and I had to hold down the homestead while my husband went to Murdo to work on the railroad out of there.

We had dry years, also good years. We raised and bought more cattle, also raised hogs so we did not have to depend on crops alone. Our constant worry in the winter was for the welfare of the livestock during blizzards. We had quite a few bad ones and were snowed in for weeks at a time. We began making White Rive our shopping town about 1920. When we crossed the Little White River we were able to cross on a bridge. But bad roads followed the bad weather as they do everywhere.

Nowadays the big trucks and good roads make life for todays' farmer and rancher much easier.

I missed the farm after we moved to White River in 1949 but enjoy our life in town and our home. And now, if our world was only at peace all over, we, as well as others, would thoroughly enjoy our later years.

* * *

### 60th Anniversary

Mr. and Mrs. Charles W. Astleford, White River, celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary, February 20, 1961. Open house was held Sunday with seven of their eleven children and their families on hand.

Mr. and Mrs. G. W. Astleford and daughter Margaret, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Astleford and daughter Shirley and Melvin Astleford, all of Minneapolis, Minn.; Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Astleford and two daughters, Lubbock, Texas; Mr. and Mrs. Gene Strain, Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Astleford and family, Mr. and Mrs. Warren Astleford, their children and grandsons, Mr. and Mrs. Donald Strain and family, Mr. and Mrs. Micheal Strain and family.

Guests numbered 150 which included friends from Valentine, Murdo, Winner, Mission and Wood.

Many lovely gifts were received. The tables were decorated with beautiful flower arrangements and a four tier cake, topped with the figure 60.

Mrs. Gene Strain poured the coffee, Mrs. Robert Astleford cut the cake and Mrs. Kenneth Astleford, Mrs. G. W. Astleford, Mrs. Herbert Astleford and Mrs. Warren Astleford sorted the gifts. Mrs. P. Lakstigala furnished the entertainment with piano music.

# Memories of the Atwood Place

**Harry and Alta Atwood**

### By Garnet Atwood Oneida

I still remember living in Mellette County, also some of the adventures we had there. I was 13 and next to the youngest of Harry and Alta Atwoods' children, when we left there.

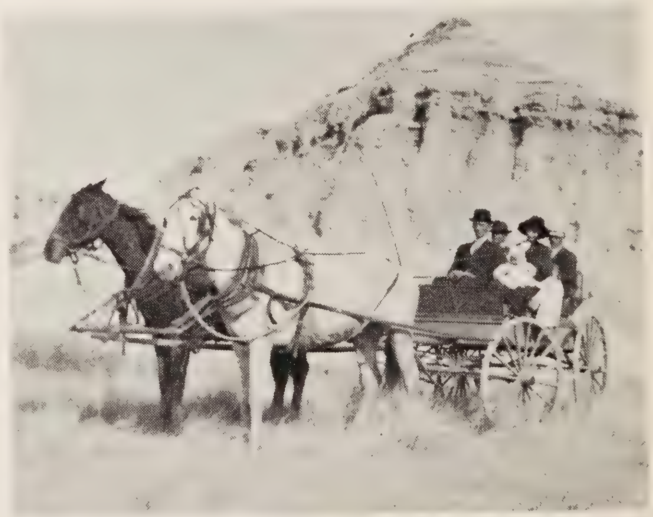
My mother passed away July 31, 1959. She had been partially paralyzed for over a year.

We don't have many early pictures because our house burned down and the house that is there now was built in 1923. (Paul and Winifred Reutter live on the Atwood place now.) Harry Atwood drew number 25 in the Homestead drawing.

I can remember my mother telling me lots of times, that my oldest brother, Woodrow, was the first baby born in that neighborhood and one of the first white babies born on the Reservation. He was born December 25, 1912.

I can remember when the folks' barn burned down They had all of the grain and hay in the hay mow and their cattle, calves and horses in the barn. Mother was home with just Bill, who was a baby, and myself. The other boys were in school, and I believe Dad was away at the neighbors. It was a terribly windy day in the fall and it didn't take long for the barn to burn. Mother ran out to get what cattle and horses out that she could. She had to leave one cow, that was tied in there, and it's calf. I imagine there are people living around there that still remember that fire. I can remember lots of people coming to help to fight fire but it was too late to save the barn.

I can remember that just a few years before we left Dakota to come to Idaho, there were those terrible dust storms. It is really hard to believe now, that we used to turn our backs when walking to school and it seems to me that they lasted for days and days. I can also remember when the Mormon crickets and grasshoppers went through there.



**Harry and Alta Atwood, with friends in Little Badlands. The baby is Woodrow Atwood, born on 32 42-27 on December 25, 1912, first white baby in this neighborhood.**

# The Banek Story

**By Mrs. Wm. Banek**

Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Banek leased a half section of Indian land in Mellette County, about four miles east of the Kary store. They moved out in May 1928 from a Tripp County farm near Winner. There was a house and barn on the new place but no fences of any kind.

Their furniture and personal possessions were brought out in a 1928 Chevrolet truck. There were seven children in the family. The three boys, Reinhold, William, Jr., and Berthold drove the cattle and several head of sheep. They had four horses on a hayrack and two saddle horses. They put a small shed on the rack where they put the little calves, which were not able to stand the long drive.

They left home on the seventh of May and traveled fifteen miles the first day. The second day was a rough one, as it rained all day long and occasionally there was snow mixed with rain. They got to a farm six miles east of Mission where they spent the night. They were cold and soaking wet. The warm farm house and hot food that was offered to them by a young couple who were recently married—was very welcome indeed. After supper they went out and milked the cows. They must have been milking quite a few as they have told that they separated ten gallons of cream from two milkings. However, the events of the day proved to be too much for the youngest brother who fell asleep in the barn.

The third day they pushed on down highway 18, through the town of Mission. They only made about ten miles that day.

The next day they started off northwest across country. They soon sighted the Kary barn and thought they were almost there. They kept going but darkness had settled when they finally reached what is now the Earl Adrian ranch. The John Wild family lived there then so Baneks stayed there that night. They only had four miles to go the next day to reach their Mellette County home.

Wilhelm and Wilhelmina Banek were born in Russia. They were also married in Russia and while still in their twenties they immigrated to the United States. They settled near Naper, Nebr., in 1907, moving to Tripp County in 1912 where they lived until 1928 when they moved to Mellette County.

Mr. and Mrs. Banek retired in the fall of 1944 and moved to Pontiac, Mich. Mr. Banek passed away on October 8, 1946.

There were seven children. The oldest son, Reinhold, passed away on March 19, 1947. Mrs. Banek and three daughters Mary, Mrs. Fritz Kasat; Alida, Mrs. Elvis Decker; and Agnes, Mrs. Randolph Guess all live in Michigan. Berthold and family live on a farm near Kimball. Wm., Jr., and family live on th former Claybaugh place and Ida, Mrs. John Karlin, Jr., and family live on what was once the Fred Littau place.

During World War II on April 17, 1945, Berthold J. Banek was awarded the silver star for gallantry in action against the enemy.

An item concerning his service during World War II reads in part as follows:

**Lost Patrol**

U.S. Sixth Division, Luzon. Lt. Berthold Banek returned Thursday with a "Lost Patrol" after having been forced to leave two wounded men behind in a Jap-surrounded ravine. The Japs had turned machine guns on the patrol after having concealed themselves in the brush as the Americans passed. Banek said, though weak and famished, the first thought of the patrol members was to return for the men they left, not knowing if they were alive or dead.

# Mystery Rock of Mellette County

**By Frank Barcal**

My folks came from the old country to Mellette County by way of South America. We finally arrived in Mellette County in 1915 and the next year bought a relinquishment from a Mr. Lemonear. Then the folks proved up on this homestead which was located on NE 31 42-27.

Nearly one-fourth of that 160 acres was a prairie dog town. (Mellette County folks know that a prairie dog town is not a shopping center but a name given to the location of prairie dog burrows. They dig underground passage ways under acres of ground. The dirt from these excavations is piled up in mounds around the holes that are the doorways of their dens. Upon these, the curious little prairie dogs can be seen sitting on their haunches and barking at anyone passing by or at each other. These rodents ate the grass roots. Also their mounds and holes were treacherous when riders or animals went across their domain, especially at night. Rattlesnakes and owls made their homes with the prairie dogs, so a prairie dog town was not a popular item to have in one's pasture.—W. R.)

Barcals First House

My Dad decided that his first job was to get rid of the prairie dogs. There was hardly a day during that first summer that we didn't kill a snake around our buildings which were located along the creek at the edge of the prairie dog town.

Our dog was bitten three different times. He more or less became immune to snake bites I guess. You might say we grew up with the snakes.

**Hunting Prairie Dogs in Mellette Co.**
**(Winifred's Cousin)**

When my oldest sister, Anna, started to school, my Dad or Mother always walked with her to the school house for fear of snakes.

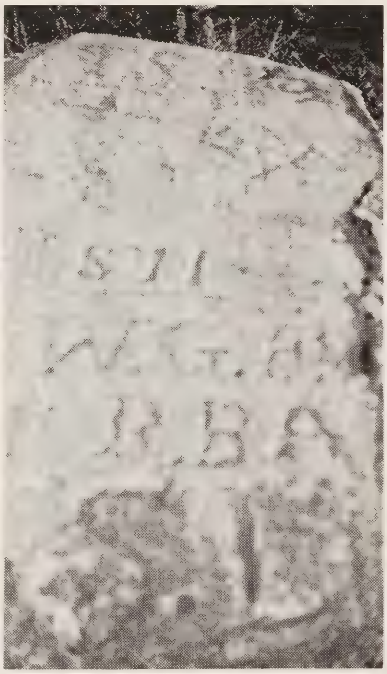
In those days coyotes were plentiful and would come on the place during the night, trying to get at the chickens which were in a hay shed, before we built our hen house. In later years, I trapped a lot of coyotes and other animals in Mellette county and in other states.

While hunting for good locations to set my traps and looking for signs of animals, I covered quite a bit of territory. On one of these excursions, I was traveling on the former Bailey land (now in Frank Krogman's pasture) and I was up on a high ridge. You can see the country around for many, many, miles from this vantage point. And there I discovered four mysterious big rocks. The main rock had brands, dated (1871) and initials carved on it's surface. The other rocks all had arrows carved on them. The peculiar thing about these arrows was that they all pointed to the northwest. I discovered these rocks in about 1922. (The small rocks have since disappeared and the larger rock has been defaced since this picture was taken. But the mystery remains.—W. R.)

We used to have some very cold winters with lots of snow. I was too young to remember much about it but I often heard the folks tell about them. One spring when the snow thawed Dad found some stray horses in the deep creek by our place. They had snowed under and frozen stiff standing up.

In later years my folks began to build and Fred Egleston helped my Dad build a large barn with a full hay mow. This barn became very popular for barn dances. These were usually held on Saturday night and were attended by the whole neighborhood, young and old. Sometimes we held a public dance there but mainly it was for neighbors. Everyone brought food for the midnight lunch and these social dances were enjoyed by all.

I'm marking the calendar and planning to be with my old friends in White River at the Fiftieth Anniversary.



**Mystery Rock**

# The Barclay Homestead Story

**By Buena Howlett Barclay**

My husband, Ira H. Barclay and I, Buena Howlett, were married in White River March 8, 1914, by Rev. Van Valkenburgh and immediately we filed on a homestead in the Texsam community some 10 or 12 miles northwest of White River.

About ten o'clock that night we were the targets for an old fashioned charivari. Guns were fired, pans were clattered and banged, anything that would make a lot of noise. We went to the door and invited the crowd in and they wished us much happiness. Ira found out who the leader was and gave him money to treat the crowd at the drugstore for we were not prepared for a charivari on Sunday, and we did not have the treats ready.

Near our new home was the Texsam Post Office located in Mr. and Mrs. Nick Witherow's house. This formed the hub of the community which spread out in a five mile radius, sometimes even farther.

My father's homestead was the first on the trail coming northwest from White River after passing Cottonwood creek. There the road branched three ways. We lived one mile west of my folks and our nearest neighbors, west of us, were Pete and Frank Bechtold, Frank Brown, Ernie McLane, Joe Petranek and the Blazek

OUR SUNDAY SCHOOL

**Texsam Sunday School About 1913**

family. To the north of us were Ralph Kositzky, C. E. Kell, Charles Shouldis and the Pastian family.

On the north and east branch of the road were Gus Kositzky, Nick Witherow, Iles Huey, Ed Kositzky and Henry Schwisow.

Here the trail branched three ways again at the school house and the T L dam. Ahead were the homes of Alan Jerred, Charles Bates, Gus Kriege, my grandmother, Mrs. B. F. Hemstreet, and later Floyd Anderson.

On the left fork going northwest, were A. V. Watson, the Shelly Findley family, Louie and Roy King and M. M. Mott.

The right fork in the trail went to the Texsam school house, then on to the Doctor Rhule homestead and the store building where his father and mother lived and had a grocery store. After they proved up, the store was leased to two bachelors named Frank Bricknor and McDonald. The other half of the building was used as a community hall. There we had box socials, pie suppers, literary societies, Sunday School and church.

Again the Texsam trail split and to the right was the Sam Texter homestead, later occupied by my sister Margie and her husband George. Down on the creek was Bert Steel's and others.

The left branch led past the Jim Briggs place, on toward the Otto Hanson and his sister's homesteads, Oscar and Art Rybergs and the Lindquists.

The Charles Astlefords from way up by the Big White River, also the Giroux and Burnette families came down to Texsam to Sunday School and socials. Others who came were Paul Gapen and his sister Bessie, also Roy and Roxie Raffensperger who lived south of Cottonwood creek.

Ira and I were the first newlyweds in the community. When our daughter Lucy was born, we had Mrs. Pastian as mid-wife and Mrs. Pete Bechtold as interpreter. Mrs. Pastian was a German graduate nurse but could not speak English.

My father brought my mother over about 2.00 A. M. and it was so dark that night that he got lost coming the mile from their place to ours. We told him if he'd just let old Joe pick his way, he would not have become lost. Then father went after Mrs. Pastian and we hung a lantern on the north side of the house to guide him back.

The next newly-weds were Alan and Fern Anderson Jerred, Gus and Gladys (Jerred) Kriege, Alva and Nina (Shouldis) Duncan, Iles and Bessie (Gapen) Huey. Frank Brown brought his bride from Iowa. Art Ryberg married Josephine Wood, one of our school teachers. Roy King brought his bride from his old home town and Bess Witherow went back to Iowa to marry her childhood sweetheart, Bert Oden.

Literary society, once a month, was the big social event of the winter. A committee arranged the programs and everyone was required to take part. We had a minstrel show, dialogue and readings. Once we even put on a three act comedy play. Jim Briggs wrote the Texsam news and invented the "Texsam Trolley," which was the setting of many of his stories. Louie King was our best dialect monologuist. We had numerous debates. The White River debate team came out and our debate team went to White River once. I don't remember which side won, but the time the White River team came out, they and all of the Texsamites who lived South of the slough, had to stay all night at the hall because of a sudden thaw that filled the slough with water. Next morning Ira ferried everyone across the slough with a team and wagon.

Once Ira and I got our days mixed up and went to literary a day late. The next time we attended, Ira was "arrested" during the intermission and then tried in a kangeroo court by a mock trial. They had a judge and jury, lawyers for defense, prosecution witnesses and everything a real court has. He was accused of willfully losing a day. He was found not guilty because of the testimony given by one "witness." They testified that I was to blame, as I must have hit him over the head with my rolling pin. And he even produced my rolling pin in evidence. Showing the court it only had one handle; therefore must have broken off when I hit (?) Ira.

When Vern Giroux and Grace Burnette were married, they came to literary and invited everyone to stay to their wedding dance. They served a delicious lunch and Vern's father played the violin for dancing. In fact, they had a sort of a family orchestra.

One Fourth of July we had a picnic at the hall. I remember Fern Jerred cut the pies and she cut clear through my new aluminum pie pan. I told her she must have thought I baked awful tough pie crust. Another cooking experience I remember was with soup beans. I thought anyone could cook beans, but the first I cooked, when I was a bride, never did get soft. I asked Mrs. Witherow what I did wrong. She laughed and said that experienced cooks had the same trouble as the water was so hard it would not do to cook beans in. So we had to melt snow or catch rain water whenever we wanted

**Adobe House on Tuggle Homestead (Shack Lean-To)**

Evidence of Blizzard of 1913

to cook navy beans. (Or parboil them in soda water for some time. W. R.).

Twice our daughter, Lucy, scared us. Before she was six months old, she disappeared from our bed, where I had laid her for her nap. I thought sure the Indians had stolen her. I found her fast asleep under the bed; somehow she had rolled down between the bed and the wall. About a year later she got lost for sure, trying to follow her father to the place where he was digging a well. We hunted along the trail toward father's homestead and on the trail to Kell's. Then started on the trail to Bechtolds, calling to her and to our collie dog who went with her. Finally we heard Collie bark and there we found Lucy, safe and once again, fast asleep.

In 1917 we proved up and went to Winner where Ira was engaged in the carpenter trade. We had two boys, Vernon in 1918, and Wayne in 1928. Vernon gave his life for his country in World War II.

Lucy is married to Russell Miller and lives northeast of Winner. They have two children, Lila Ann and Alfred. Lila Ann is married, lives in Winner and has three children, so we are great grandparents.

Our son, Wayne, is married, lives in Lincoln, Nebr., and has two children.

We moved to Lincoln, Nebr., in October, 1941. Ira helped build the air force base buildings and has been carpentering here ever since.

There aren't many of the old neighbors left around Texsam. The homesteads have been fenced now inside of huge cattle ranches. The names of most of the owners have changed. Frank Day, who used to run a spread on Cottonwood Creek, has been gone many years.

Bill Jensen is the only one I know that is still living on his father's homestead. He has increased his cattle and his acreage until his pastures now include many of the homesteads I have mentioned.

I hope I have not left anyone out. It is pretty hard to remember when you have been away as long as we have, which is going on 44 years. I would enjoy hearing from any of the old homesteaders who would care to write.

* * *

## Excerpts From Butte Valley Homesteaders Cook Book

By Winifred Reuter

Back in the early days of Mellette County, an ambitious group of women who lived in Butte community (south and east of Wood) put out a cook book of their own recipes. They used recipes from their own and surrounding areas. It is interesting to note there was no time or temperature given in those recipes as the cooks in those days didn't have all the gadgets and controls on their stoves that we do now.

But they had a wonderful sense of humor. On page 33 there is a recipe, How to Preserve a Husband:

Use care in selecting. Do not choose too young or too old and only a variety reared in a good, moral atmosphere. Once decided upon and selected, that part remains settled forever. Give your entire thought to preparing for home use. Some insist on preparing them in a pickle, some roast them occasionally, others are continually getting them in hot water. Even poor varieties may be made sweet, tender and good by garnishing with patience, sweeten with smiles, flavor with kisses to taste, wrapped well in a mantle of love, baked with a steady fire of devotion and served honey, peaches and cream. Thus prepared they will keep forever.

This was copied out of one of the cook books loaned to me by Buena Howlett Barclay. I also liked a paragraph on page 23 at the beginning of the section on cakes. Her First Cake: She measured out the butter with a very solemn air, with the milk and sugar also and she took the greatest care—to count the eggs correctly; and to add a little bit, of baking powder which you know, beginners oft omit. Then she stirred it all together and baked it a full hour, but she never quite forgave herself for leaving out the flour!

We'll give you one recipe: Fudge Cake. One cup sugar, half cup butter, half cup milk, one and one-half cups flour, 2 and ½ teaspoons baking powder, 2 ounces melted chocolate and 2 eggs. By M. V. Hedrick.

Other contributors to the Homesteaders Cook Book were Mrs. Miles Peterson, Mrs. Jas. L. Orr, Mrs. M. H. Weed, Carrie Nelson, Mabel Cumberland, Eva L. Vaughn, Fannie Binder, Mrs. O. H. Simpson, Mrs. W. W. Jordan, Mrs. C. H. Bigler, Mrs. Herman Hellekson, Monica Carter, Mrs. E. E. Peoples, Mrs. Charles Mains, Mrs. F. C. Thurlo, Mrs. Nellie Gerard, Mrs. J. A. Harps, Mrs. Harry Morse, Mrs. Swanson, Mrs. H. E. Muth, Mrs. E. H. Albers and many others.

# Homesteading on Number 191

By Mrs. P. G. Beilke

We, Paul G. and Lillie C. Beilke, came to Mellette County in April 1912 to a bare plot of land of 160 acres. Only tree branches and stakes were in the ground to show us where the edge of our land was. We drew our number at a Government Homestead Drawing in the fall of 1911. It was in October and we drew number 191. We had a rather good choice of land, but had to live on it, improve it and pay some to acquire a deed. We lived there until March 1916.

Then we went back to my father's farm. It was in Aurora County, near Stickney, South Dakota. We had

**Mrs. Swartz, Mr. Swartz, Walter Bettin, Harlen Beilke, Ida Hanson (1921)**

320 acres and World War I was on. We farmed and did trucking, threshing and corn shelling until January 1926. Then we moved to Modesto, Calif., bought a three-acre place and still own it. We have four houses on it and a service station.

Back in 1912, we drove to Mellette County from Center Township with all our belongings in a large lumber wagon. We had three horses, one top buggy, nine cows, some chickens and two pigs. (We had been told that if we kept pigs, the rattlesnakes would leave.)

We came across the old Missouri River near Platte, S. D., on the Wheeler Ferry with all the possessions we owned in 1912. Some of the cattle jumped off of the ferry and swam back across the river. The men finally got the herd quiet. There were flashes of lightning for light so the men got them together and ferried them across again. With us was Tom McCord of Stickney, who helped with the cattle. He was very good help.

Upon arriving at "191," we moved our wagon within our boundary lines and lived in it a week, until we were able to build a chicken house. We lived in this house one year, with a bed built three and a half feet up against the wall to avoid rattlesnakes.

At 9:00 A.M. on the first morning that we were in this building, we saw at the doorway, a large rattlesnake with nine rattles, trying to find the sunshine. It had been in the building all night. That same year, I (Mrs. Beilke) killed 59 rattlesnakes—some with a hoe, some with a gun, but mostly from my buckskin saddlehorse with a black-snake or bull whip. The horse would just circle around so I could hit the snake until it was safe to take the club or gun to finish the job.

We had a few neighbors: Mr. and Mrs. Will MacDonald and family, Briggs, Sime Fridy and brother, Ray Clooney, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Swartz and daughter, Mathilda (later she became Mrs. Hardie). The Asbury family lived up over the ridge and were still there when we sold our place in 1916.

I remember the Government roundups. It lasted from a week up to three weeks. It was a wonderful, exciting time. Music and dancing and drums beating day and night. We used to estimate that there were three thousand Indians there. There were lots of cattle, children, dogs and horses. The Indian costumes were really beautiful. It took a lot of work and effort to do all the beadwork from foot wear to head gear. The Indian men wore real eagle feathers, bells, elk teeth, bone beads and spurs. We called the place the Government Flat, not far from us on the bank of the White River, where they camped. We could very plainly see them every day and also in the beautiful moonlight, and we could hear them sing and dance. The men danced with terrific fury and labor.

We knew Mr. and Mrs. Joe Running Bear. Mrs. was a wonderful seamstress. They had a fine home, Government built, near us and she spent many, many days at our house.

Bordeaux also lived not too far from us along the White River. Their son came over often. There was also an Indian Boarding School down on the river. There the Indian youngsters attended school. The girls were taught domestic work and the boys to milk and farm, etc., all under adult supervision.

We raised good potatoes, millet and corn. We lived high, always had lots of potatoes, potato-water gravy, and we had fried, cooked, roasted, chopped cottontails for meat! To me they are no treat!

Our drinking water was hauled daily from the Little White River. Of course we always dipped it up above where the horses and cattle were standing or Indians washing and bathing. I can still relish and remember that water.

We never had a bad flood, only flash floods. They were a delight to see, as there were all sizes of rattlesnakes tossed about by logs and brush, etc. The snakes are really helpless in water. We were there when Margaret MacDonald was snake bitten and passed away the next day.

On rainy nights the coyotes would come into the chicken house and kill everything in sight. We did dig up eleven young coyotes and kept and raised one pair. One always could not be trusted, but the male would help herd cattle and loved to play. One night both were left loose and they took our chickens and also those of two neighbors, so that was the end of their career.

Our lights were kerosene lanterns and lamps. We had little wall reflector lamps, high up on the wall for safety sake out of reach of the children. It was a good reading light; later we also had a gas lamp. Our bread was baked in the oven of a wood or kerosene stove.

We had many dances in the homes. About thirty of us would gather and have a wonderful time. A one to

**Mr. and Mrs. P. G. Beilke, Feb. 20, 1960, Celebrating Their 50th Wedding Anniversary**

four piece orchestra: comb, harmonica, accordion, and sometimes even a fiddle. There were no barns to dance in before 1916 in our vicinity.

We tried to farm. We raised a few chickens, millet, corn and watermelons. My husband did some freight hauling from Murdo, S. D., for Mr. Brown, the postmaster at White River. He went through gumbo knee deep. Hight had a general store there. I still have a couple of loose bottom cake pans from Hight's store. Doctors, dentists, there were none. Tomsiks came and built a hotel in town. My boy was too small for school, so we only heard about the teachers coming to town. We also helped organize and build the "Happy Hollow" Church.

We have never had the privilege of coming back to White River to visit. It is a beautiful country to see and we have longed many times to spend a week there. Last February 20, we celebrated fifty years of wedded life.

The very best wishes to all.

# G. Cleve Berry Family History

By Mrs. Jan (Berry) Rasmussen

G. Cleve Berry brought his bride, the former Jessie Iddings, to his homestead in western Mellette County in 1914. They arrived at their new home in a covered wagon, pulling behind them a buggy and one red milk cow. Mrs. Berry was originally from Pleasantville, Ia., then Millboro, S. D. Cleve was a native of Holt County, Nebr., where his mother held the dubious honor of being that county's first white woman resident.

Their first home was a one-room homestead shack located about three miles north and west of the ridge known as Cedarbutte. The first child, Marian, was born here, and they then moved to a claim a little east, at the north side of Cedarbutte. This became the permanent ranch site.

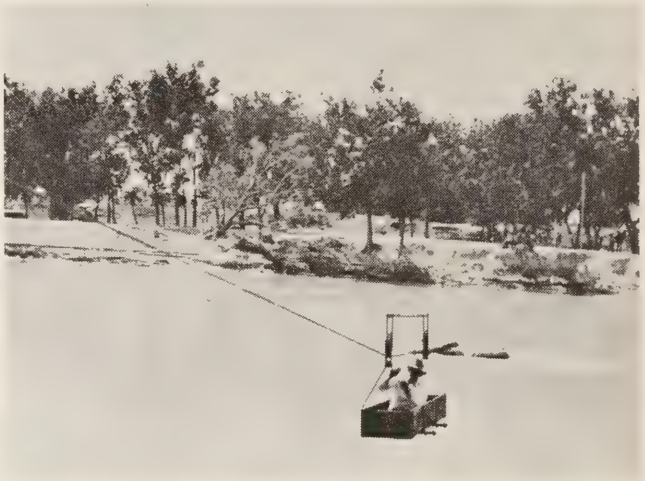
Homesteading nearby were Cleve's two brothers, Tom and Claude. Tom later became Governor of S. D.

Stories handed down about those rugged early ranching days are primarily concerned with the constant struggle to win out over the elements, to provide nourishment for family and stock, and to somehow maintain a satisfactory standard of living. Combined with these trials of existence however was a sense of humor and a communal desire for fun. Homes were quite plentiful in the neighborhood, and entertainment was of the do-it-yourself type.

Many dances were held in the homes, sometimes for most of the night, to music they played themselves. Mrs. Berry was an accomplished pianist and Cleve presided at the drums. Jimmy Johns played the banjo; two brothers, Mick and Chet Dodds, helped out with a ukulele and a guitar; and George Schuknecht was the fiddler. Since baby sitters were unheard of the children learned to sleep as many as necessary to a bed.

A favorite Berry family story describes Mr. Berry's harrowing trip home from Belvidere with a new piano balanced precariously in the wagon box. A skittish team that slid and skidded, pulled the wagon over icy, frozen ditches and hills. The piano was very precious cargo, and through some miracle got to the homestead still standing upright.

Four daughters eventually made up the Cleve Berry family. They are: Mrs. Marian Hafnor, who lives with her four children in Aberdeen, S. D.; Mrs. Phyllis Howie, mother of three children and wife of Lt. Col. R. G. Howie, living in North Carolina; Mrs. Betty Tesar who has five children, married to Dr. Charles Tesar and living in Minneapolis, Minn.; and Mrs. Jan Rasmussen, now residing on the home ranch with her husband, Skee and two children. Mrs. Hafnor's husband, Eldor, passed away three years ago.



**Crossing the Big White River by cable car near Thode Ranch.**

Frontier Days at White River was produced in 1922 by the Berry brothers, with many cowboys appearing, some destined for later rodeo fame. Among these was Earl Thode, a local cowboy from Belvidere, who went on to become World's Champion all-around cowboy. The purse was large and attracted rodeo hands from many parts of the country. Families from miles around packed up their wagons and gear, then camped in tents for the duration of the celebration. The rodeo was held for many years at White River.

The first horses on Cleve's place numbered 33 and he used this number for his brand. It is still the official ranch brand.

Mrs. Berry taught school several years in the western section of the county, at times finding it necessary to live in the school house with her two small daughters. Some schools were quite large, others very small.

In 1934 Mrs. Berry passed away after a brief illness of pneumonia. Cleve resided on the ranch until his death in 1956. In 1946 Mr. Berry and Rose Looney were married and she now resides in White River.

* * *

## Marian Berry Hafnor Tells Her Story

By Mrs. Marian Hafnor

The following graphic story was submitted by Mrs. Marian Hafnor, Cleve and Jessie's oldest daughter:

Now that I have experienced the many concerns of motherhood several times I can really appreciate the story my mother often told me of my own introduction into Mellette County.

My new home-to-be was a small one-room homestead shack, perched on a long, wind-swept slope in the western part of the county. It was completely surrounded by snow—very deep snow. If they had been keeping records in 1915 and before, the snow must have set a new one, as travel was almost impossible even by horseback. In many places a riders boots and stirrups would drag in the snow, making additional tracks besides the great holes the horses made as they plunged through the drifts. It was in the month of March, so of course the snow could not stay, that deep on the prairie, too much longer. But that did not help Cleve Berry in his immediate problem of getting medical help for his young wife and their baby soon to arrive. Whom to get? Getting the Doctor from Belvidere was out of the question because of the snow. Cleve and Jessie must have felt very alone in their little house on the snow covered hillside. I can imagine they might have felt some panic too.

There was a trail broken down to Black Pipe Creek where Tom and Rena Berry lived, so Cleve hurried there to bring Rena. She came on horseback and did what she could, but it became evident that additional experienced help was needed. So they called another neighbor living on the creek, Mrs. Jennie Leading Cloud. She had helped Indian mothers with new babies and her kindness must have been much appreciated by the young parents.

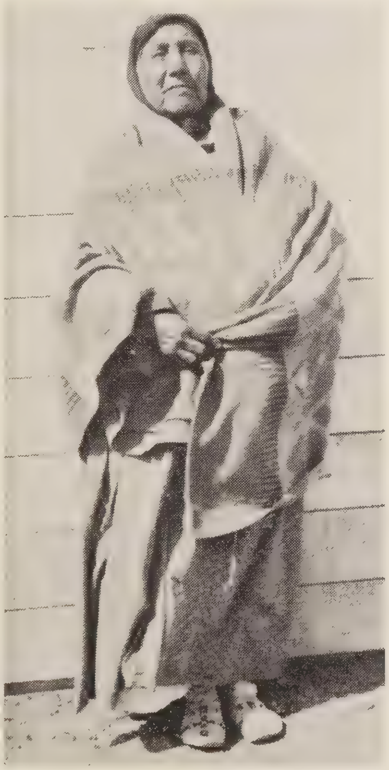
As she was tucking the new hand-stitched blankets about the tiny baby girl, she asked what they planned to name her. Upon learning that they were undecided about a middle name, she suggested one that the Sioux used for the first-born, providing that it is a girl. That is how I came to be named Marian Wynona.

As a little girl growing up, I always felt a strong bond with our Indian neighbors and friends. To most of them I was known only as "Wynona," as they knew of the part that one of them had played in my birth and christening. They kept careful check on my growth with a kindly pat on the head, and a soft spoken "Lele Washte Winchinchilla." For my part I was always fully aware that I, perhaps, owed my very life to a real native of Mellette County.

# David Blue Thunder Story

**By Bess Adrian**

Dave Blue Thunder was born November 15, 1891, at the Ring Thunder Indian Camp. It was located in what is now Louie Krogman's pasture. He was the son of John Blue Thunder, an Indian policeman, who held the position of captain of the Police Force. His mother's allotment name was White Buffalo Woman. There were four sisters and nine brothers in the Blue Thunder family. At present, 1961, he has two living sisters, Harriet Bad Hand and Mary Blue Thunder. Three brothers are still living, Leo, Harry and Louie Blue Thunder.



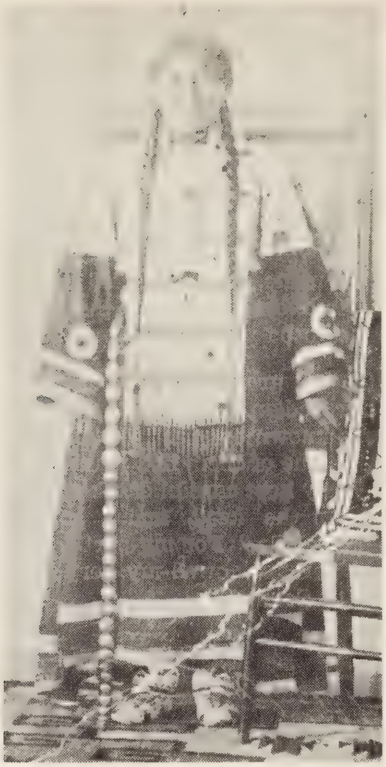
Mother of Blue Thunder, White Buffalo Woman.

Dave started to school at the Ring Thunder Day School when he was six years old. That school was located at the top of the Little White River hill, east of the present road leading through Ring Thunder. Some of the Teachers that he remembers were; George Olson, Mr. Thorne, Mr. Kingsley, Mr. Scovel and Mr. McKenzie.

Many of the older Indians could not speak English at that time. Louie Roubideaux who lived at Rosebud, S. D., acted as an interpreter for them in conducting their busines at the office. Dave married Louie Roubideaux's daughter on September 13, 1915. Her allotment name was Alice Big Face. She was born about one half mile south of where Louie Krogmans live now. Mr. and Mrs. Dave Blue Thunder had five children. One daughter died in 1919. Their daughter, Mabel, lives in the Ring Thunder community, and Rose is a nurse at the Veterans Hospital at Hot Springs, S. D. His son Francis lives near his father and his son Vernie was killed last fall. Dave's wife passed away in 1929.

Dave's brothers and sister live on their allotments just south of the Mellette County line. They formed a sort of a Blue Thunder community, with their cattle all together in large pastures and they put up their hay together. Harry Blue Thunder is known as one of the best hay stackers in this part of Mellette County. Stacks that he made always look like huge loaves of bread. The Blue Thunders are Catholic and Harry has acted as catechist for many years so even if the regular Priest isn't able to get there, Dave, his brothers, sisters and their families can hold services at the Blue Thunder church.

On Sundays, throughout the summer, they have hockey and ball games in which all the Indians in the neighborhood take part. Dave Blue Thunder used to have a string of relay ponies which he entered during Frontier Days at White River, winning first money. He said that the rodeo grounds at that time were located near where the high school building is in White River now. He also entered in the saddle bronc riding. He followed the rodeos and races until 1932. He has entered



**Etta Blue Thunder Bad Hand, lives in Ring Thunder community.**

races in Murdo, S. D., Winner, S. D., Valentine, Nebr., Cody, Nebr., Rosebud and Parmelee, S. D.

Dave remembers the round-up of 1908. The Indians had some cattle but at that time, the Government issued more cattle to them. Each member of a family was to receive one heifer. The round-up would start June 1. Wagon number one was Spring Creek and Rosebud; Number two was Parmelee; Number three was Norris; Number four was White River; Number five was Butte Creek and Wood; Number six was Ponca, down east. The last round-up was in 1916.

At present, Dave lives in a house close to the Blue Thunder church in Todd County about ten miles northwest of Mission, S. D.

* * *

## Interpretation of the Big Missouri's Winter Count

(Information From Harry Blue Thunder)

1890 - 1902

1890—This year General Crook, known to the Indians as Three Stars, made a treaty and agreement with the Indians to receive their land allotments.

1891—This year marked the end of the great Indian Ghost Dance. Big Foot of the Standing Rock Reservation was one of the leaders of the Ghost Dance. He wore feathers on his wrists and in his hair. He wore his shirt that was said to be impervious to the White Man's bullets, when the soldiers tried to capture Big Foot and his band. The famous Chief of the Standing Rock Band, Sitting Bull was killed with several of his comrades. After the battle, Big Foot traveled to the sight of the famous Wounded Knee Battlefield and there he was killed in battle, Dec. 29, 1890. The Ghost Dancers thought that providence would soon clear the earth of all White Men and the Indians would again rule supreme.

1892—This year two head of cattle were issued to each member of the Tribe, including women and children.

1893—Iron Sided Bear, a great Medicine Man died.

1894—This year, the Government made the first per capita payment. The amount was $30.00 for each member of the Tribe, including women and children. The picture represents silver dollars.

1895—This year part of the band of Lower Brule Sioux Indians located in the vicinity of Hamill, S. D., were driven back to their own Reservation by the Police Force. The picture shows Holy Bull in a desperate attempt to establish his teepees among the Rosebud Indians. Crooked Back, a desperate Lower Brule Indian was tied by his feet with a rope and dragged to the Lower Brule Reservation, where the whole Lower Brule Tribe was held by the Police Force for two years.

1896—This year the Indians of the Lower Brule Reservation were given their allotment of land and the regular Sioux benefits were issued. A wagon was one of the principal items issued.

1897—This year a few of the most stubborn of the Lower Brule Indians made agreements with the Rosebud Indians which was approved by the Government, to return to the Rosebud Reservation and settle along the Big White River in the vicinity of Hamill, S. D.

1898—This year an official came from Washington to the Rosebud Sioux and made a final agreement to adopt a certain number of Lower Brule Indians into the Rosebud Tribe. They were ever afterwards to be called Rosebud Sioux. The picture shows the Indians touching a pen in the act of signing an agreement.

1899—This year, a noted Indian Policeman named Swimmer, while on official duty had a fall with his horse. The horse fell on him and broke his leg, which had to be amputed later.

1900—This year the Government built a Commissary for the adopted Lower Brule Sioux at the present sight of Hamill, S. D.

1901—This year Bad Dog died of smallpox. He was the only member of the Tribe who had the disease and the year is known as the year Bad Dog died.

1902—This year shows the Indians signing the final agreement with the Government for the opening of Gregory County for settlement.

### TODAY

Yesterday is memory—
Tomorrow is but a dream.
Today, is the day—to do the deed
To make your whole life gleam.
—Winifred Reutter

# The Boblett Story

**By Mrs. Charles Pigg**

The Beecher Boblett family homesteaded eight miles north of White River in 1912. They lived on their claim for a short time but because there was no school close, they returned to Casey, Ia. There they lived and educated their three children, Leona, George and Bessie.

The Bobletts, during their homesteading days, attended the homesteaders picnic near White River in 1913 and also the Frontier Days celebration.

Mr. B. F. Hasson's place joined the Boblett homestead on the east. Joe Stanek's place was north of Hasson's. John Ertz who also lived in that vicinity was last heard from in Bloomington, Wisc.

In 1953 Mr. Boblett sold the homestead to Eugene Hutchinson Sr.

Mrs. Boblett died February 5, 1946, and Mr. Boblett on December 23, 1953.

The Beecher Boblett family on their homestead, eight miles north of White River, S. D.

# Homesteading in 1914

**By Luther Boicourt**

I homesteaded twenty five miles northwest of White River in 1914. That was the year I became 21 years of age. We lived at Dallas, S. D., at that time and the new homestead was 100 miles northwest of us.

I had filed on this claim July 27, 1914. In the spring of 1915 I was light hearted, thinking of a new home all my own. So I decided to take a half dozen sacks of seed corn, a corn planter, breaking plow, three section of harrow and head for the new frontier.

The grief that I had on this trip has left it's imprint to this day. Normally, it was a three day trip with a team and wagon. I had four head on my wagon, a pair of mules and a team of horses.

Mrs. Luther Boicourt, standing by horse, about 1918. She passed away seven months after they were married.

I reached the town of White River after the first two days. That was the end of any reasonable road. From White River on there were only Indian trails.

I camped two miles west of White River the second night and felt sure that I would get to the homestead the third day as I had planned.

It was a sloppy, wet spring after the heavy snows had melted off. I had a narrow-tired wagon and there were no roads. Just bottomless prairie to cross.

I had not traveled three miles until my wagon mired down to the axle in a wet ravine. So I had to carry the sacks of seed corn—down the wagon tongue—to get across the water and mud. And that is the way I unloaded my wagon.

Then I had to roll the machinery out into the water and mud, then drag them out. The horses finally pulled out the empty wagon. Then I had to reload everything.

This happened over and over again. I only made about seven miles that day.

I had eaten the last food that I had taken along that morning, thinking that I would soon be out to father and mother's homestead which was just across the section line from mine.

I had about the same luck the second day, again making around seven miles. I couldn't leave my wagon because the Indian ponies that were loose on the prairie would tear open my seed corn sacks and seed corn was a scarce item in those days, out there.

There was no place to get any food. I was on an Indian Reservation and most of them did not speak English at that time and their homes were miles apart. I finally got stuck bad in Cottonwood Creek about seven miles from home. I was becoming exhausted so I unhitched my horses. Riding one and leading the other three I started on my journey. I had gone two and a half days without a morsel of food.

Then, riding seven miles on a plow horse, with a harness on, capped the climax. When I reached my folk's homestead and told my mother that I had missed five meals, she almost collapsed. She fried some eggs and fixed a good meal. But my stomach had shrunk until I could only eat a few bites.

I believe I could have gone on to complete starvation without pain. Going without food and the tremendous amount of work that I had done, combined to make this an unforgetable experience.

# Doctoring in Mellette County

**By Mrs. F. E. Bouza**

Dr. F. E. Bouza came to White River in August 1919 after serving eighteen months as a regimental surgeon behind the firing lines in Germany during World War I.

He was born on a farm near Tyndall, S. D., May 10, 1879, and passed away April 10, 1960, at Hot Springs, S. D.

He was a graduate of Creighton University, Omaha, Nebr., and spent his entire life in South Dakota except while at school and in the Armed Forces.

Doctor Bouza was probably one of the first West River doctors to hold mass inoculations for typhoid fever, smallpox and diphtheria. These were held at the various school houses, where anyone wanting to be vaccinated could take advantage of this free service. Typhoid was very common in Mellette County at one time. Smallpox and diphtheria were a problem there also.

Rattlesnake bites were quite common also and in one week he had three cases. These were quite difficult to handle those days, as there was no anti-venom serum, so he would cut the flesh near the bite and apply suction cups. These would need to be changed every few minutes. However, he never lost a case.

Once an emergency call came from near Norris. A woman had broken her leg. The creek was high and the bridge washed out, so he had to leave the car and wade across to their waiting car. Such was the life of a country doctor.

In March 1938 Doctor Bouza was struck by a car in White River and badly injured. After being hospitalized until October, he returned to White River and had a limited practice for a few years until his health failed.

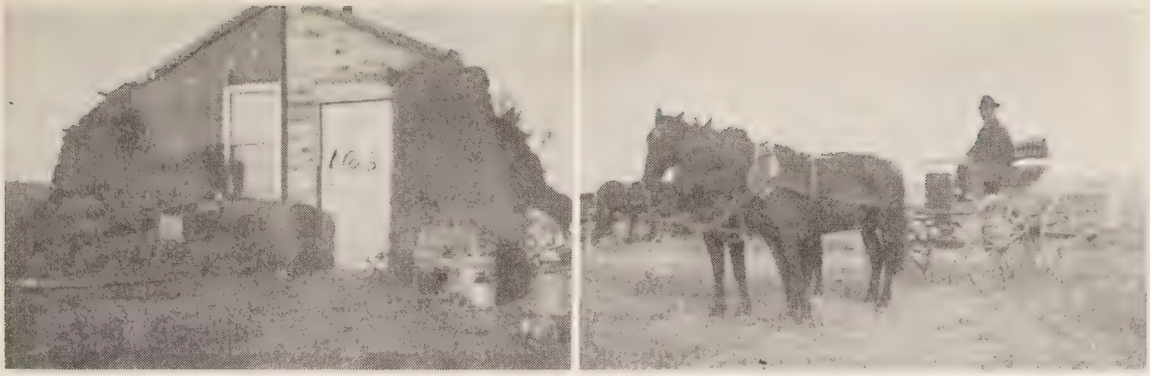
"Doc" in uniform, always a part of the Memorial Day parade in White River. Picture by W. R.

# Comments and Observations

**By Edward Boyden (and his sister, Mrs. C. F. Sinning)**

About fifty years ago, when Mellette County in the Rosebud Reservation was declared open to homesteaders, I registered but my name was not drawn.

I believe there were about three thousand claims and nearly fifty thousand persons registered. We deposited our cards in big cream cans and the drawing system was worked out by the Secretary of the Interior. My father drew number 163. There was a standing offer of $10,000.00 for claim number one. The winners were allowed to point out their choice of land on a giant size map and the price was determined by the surveyors who drew the map. Prices ranged from grazing land at 50



**Boyden Claim Shack "163"**
(Boyden in Buggy)

cents per acre to $6.00 for farm land. The local land office agents would take the homesteaders out and locate the surveyors' markers for additional fees.

I took the St. Paul railroad train at an excursion rate to Rapid City. Then I visited Lead and Deadwood and came back to Murdo, S. D. Somewhere along the route the train was side-tracked for three hours, to allow a cattle train to go through. The conductor said that they gave the cattle train right of way because they had to unload, feed and water the cattle every sixteen hours.

I stayed in Murdo at a small rooming house. By the window in my room was a long coil of rope to throw out and slide down in case of fire.

**Ed Boyden and Chas. Hamilton**
Homesteaders found grouse and rabbits good hunting and good eating.

The next morning we got a grubstake, some lumber and started across the prairie for the claim, about thirty miles south. About half way we stopped at a homesteaders who had a small grocery store and hardware. He told us we were the first customers he had seen in weeks. He had just received an order for two carloads of range horses for the Government. He needed cowboys to round them up. He had them branded and, at his last count, had about two thousand head scattered all over the country.

Our first job on dad's claim was to build a shelter and then dig a well. We dug down about sixteen feet. The next morning the water was up to the top, quite unusual for that part of the plains. The water tasted like sulphur. So we added some ginger or made tea so we could drink it.

Our next job was to make a dam. Then we planted wheat and corn, also apple trees, but it was too dry for them. I remember we had nice warm days, chinook winds, meadow-larks, magpies and all kinds of wild flowers in Mellette County.

We also had good hunting, jack rabbits, prairie chickens, and I even got a badger. South Dakota is the Sunshine state. I wondered if that badger had followed me out there from the Badger State, Wisconsin.

There were close neighbors all around. Those on the east Mr. and Mrs. John Smith and daughter Sophia. Mrs. Smith baked bread for us. On the northwest were Mr. and Mrs. Will Egleston and Gust Gunner. On the east was Ernest Hamilton, on the south Fred Egleston and southeast of us was Cody Sinning. Cody had a real house, barn and cattle sheds. He dug a cave into the side of a hill and had a cooler for vegetables. He also put up ice to chill milk and cream. He later became my brother-in-law. He had a small store with groceries and hardware, also the Cody postoffice, of which he was the postmaster.

He was quite a trader. I got fence posts in exchange for a shotgun from him. Then to get back the shotgun I traded him a derby hat. When I was leaving S. D., I wanted the hat back, and to get it I had to give him a pair of binoculars. I just got away from there in time or he would have had my fur coat too.

To prove up and earn a homestead is a full time job. One must call on every resource and talent he has—

**Alice and Ed, Authors of This Story, Having Fun on Dad's Homestead**

many times that isn't enough. There are hardships to struggle with that would make strong men weak, and weak men stagger. At times, you got so tired you could trip sitting down. Sometimes when you can't make both ends meet (meat) you can make one end sausage! It often got so hot and dry in Dakota that the creeks squeaked. It would be much harder if it weren't for your good neighbors. They liked to see a family make a real effort to succeed. But they are right on hand to help out when one needs help, and many times we all needed it. The only time one would spit in a neighbor's face was if his mustache was on fire.

Well! Here's hoping Mellette County will continue to grow and prosper even more in the next fifty years!

**Jean and Florence Sinning with cousin, Mary Ellen Koehler, June 1935. Bess Boyden on upstairs porch.**

# Teaching Indians of the Plains

**Written by J. H. Bratley, (Deceased.)**
**(Sent to us by his son, Forrest G. Bratley, M. D.)**

My father, J. H. Bratley, who was an Indian Day School Teacher, started to write an autobiography but he died in 1948, just after he almost finished a rough draft of this chapter which covers a period of four years beginning in 1895. The following represents excerpts from Chapter XVI.

It took a full week, from the time we left Fort Gamble, Wash., to reach the Whirlwind Soldier Indian Day School. In 1895 we bought our tickets to Valentine, Nebr., as our Indian Agent advised. From Valentine we went by a stage to the Rosebud Agency.

**The Late Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Bratley. Mr. Bratley was teacher at Lower Cut Meat School, 1895-1899; Mrs. Bratley was housekeeper.**

Major J. George Wright, U. S. Indian Agent, told us he had twenty-one Day Schools on the Reservation and he was getting 18 new teachers. Because my wife and I had two years experience with Indians he wanted us to be at Lower Cut Meat Day School but it would be several weeks before the carpenters could finish the remodeling of the school building so in the meantime he would send us out, sixty miles farther to the Whirlwind Soldier Camp School.

The next day, our two big trunks, three telescopes and ourselves were loaded into the Government hack (a covered wagon). It took us two full days to reach the school, driving over miles of prairie with little or no road. We passed through the Whirlwind Soldier Indian Camp, a little more than one mile before we reached the school in the valley on the bank of dry Oak Creek. I tell you, it did not look very home-like set out there one hundred miles from a railroad. It was sixty miles from the Agency and we would have to be satisfied to get our mail once in every ten or twenty days. No white faces nearer than thirty miles away. Water for drinking and cooking had to be carried one mile. When I reached the school house, I had to skim the flies and grasshoppers off the water. The camp and also the school were named for the old Indian Chief, Whirlwind Soldier, (Later called Bad Nation School, in Mellette County).

A few weeks later, on a Sunday afternoon, I was out taking a little stroll along the dry creek and as I looked up toward the Indian camp I saw the outline of the Government hack silhouetted by the setting sun. I hurried back to the school house and told my wife we would have company within a few minutes. Soon, John Dunbar drove into the yard. He told us that he had come out to get us, and that we must be packed and loaded, ready to start for the Agency by sunrise in the morning. We packed our baggage that night. We were up early the next morning, breakfast over, baggage loaded and were leaving the school just at sunrise. It took until sundown to reach the Syple Issue House (Half-way house). There was a letter here for us from my mother. On opening it, I found a clipping from the Wichita Daily Eagle, stitched to the top of her letter. Mother wrote just under the clipping: "Jesse, we are scared that the Indian Agent is not telling you what is happening at Rosebud Agency." The clipping said, "The Brule Sioux Indians have gone on the warpath under the leadership of Chief Hollow Horn Bear. They have given the employees 21 days to leave the reservation or they will have to suffer the consequences." I showed the clipping to Mr. Dunbar, our driver, and asked him if this was the trouble. He said, "Yes it is.

I am traveling under Government orders and I am not to mention this trouble to anyone."

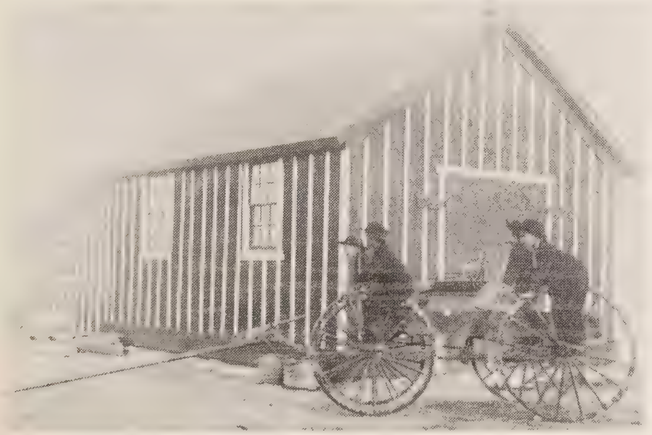
The next morning, we left the half-way house at sunrise and pulled into the Rosebud stockade gate just as the sun was going down in the West. We were told that Hollow Horn Bear had been captured and placed in chains. We were kept at the Agency for nearly two weeks. Then we were sent out, sixteen miles to the Lower Cut Meat School House. It was a full week before we could open school. We were glad to be only sixteen miles from the Agency instead of sixty.

Hollow Horn Bear was very sullen and stubborn towards the Government for two years, then he turned out to be a real friend and respected the wishes of the Indian Agent. The Government put his picture, wearing full head dress, on the five dollar silver certificate of the 1900 Issue. A few years later, his likeness was put on the fourteen cent postage stamp and it was known as the American Indian Stamp.

When we were established at Lower Cut Meat we bought a cow, a team of horses, harness, an Elkhart spring wagon, a couple of pigs and some chickens. I made a dugout shelter for the cow, also for the chickens in the creek bank. There was a small stable for our horses. Our living quarters and school were all under one roof. The building was one story in the shape of a letter T. Beginning at the west end was our bedroom, living room, dining room and kitchen—all in a row from west to east. The sewing room was entered from our dining room. It also had a door to the anteroom. The sewing room was some thirty feet square with shelves along the south wall for storing shoes, socks, clothing and bolts of yard goods. The room was well lighted by windows on the east and west sides. In the room were, cutting table, three sewing machines, a number of chairs and a cook stove. The stove was used to cook the noon lunch for the children and to heat the sewing room when the weather was cold.

From two to four P. M., Mrs. Bratley and the larger girls, made all the clothing for the girls and some for the smaller boys, including sunbonnets for the girls. Suits and shirts for the larger boys were furnished ready made. From the anteroom you could pass into the school room or go outdoors.

Indian Day Schools were just like the old District schools—they opened at 9 A. M. and closed at 4 P. M. Indian children were furnished with a noon lunch so they did not have to carry lunches in tin pails, as we used to do during our school days. When two o'clock came we sent all the smaller children home to their teepees and the large girls to the sewing room while I took the large boys out to work. The agent furnished us materials so the boys and I built a carpenter shop and a blacksmith shop. The boys liked very much to work with tools. They seemed to prefer blacksmith work because as we would go out of the school room the boys would call, "Mr. Bratley let us pound iron today." In the carpenter shop we made tables and stools for the children to take home. In the blacksmith shop we repaired Indian wagons, harness and hasps for the doors of their winter log houses, which many of the Indians were building.



Sioux Boys Playing, Lower Cut Meat School

There were a great number of rusted sulky hay rakes that had been issued to the Indians that were never used and were rusting out. From the teeth we made hasps and screw drivers. If at any time we found that the Indians did not use these articles we had them returned to the shop to give out to others who would use them.

Cut Meat Creek made a horseshoe bend in front and to the right of our school house. In this bend was a nice flat of some three acres, covered with a thick growth of choke cherries, buffalo berries and a number of big trees. The creek was dry most of the year and was dry when we went there at the end of September 1895. I knew it would have water in it when the winter snows melted. I went to work with the Indian boys, a scraper and my team. We made a dirt dam across the creek. We cleared the three acres in the bend and were ready for the winter snows which always came in the cold Dakotas.

When the snow melted in the creek it filled our pond to the brim. We had another cold spell that first winter which froze all the water in the pond. This gave me another idea, which was to build an ice house and fill it with ice, so as to have ice during the hot summer days. The boys and I went to work and dug into the Badland bank just back of the shop. This faced the north. The Indian Agent supplied enough lumber to line the walls and for the roof. We put dirt on the board roof to insulate the top. The ice was too thick to saw. We had to cut it out in big chunks with axes. It did not pack well in the ice house. However, we put up more than enough to last all summer. The next season, and each winter thereafter, we watched the ice and when it became eight inches thick, we sawed the ice into squares which we could lay up nicely in the ice house. We had ice continuously to the end of the four years we were at this school. Our milk house was in front of the ice house so we set our milk and butter in the drain from the ice. The ice was something that no other of the twenty schools had.

We would save up the milk for a few days and make ice cream for the Indian children but at first they would not eat it. They later enjoyed it as they did the tomatoes from the school garden.

We made ditches and ran water over the entire three acres. Then we learned that sub-irrigation did the watering even to the further end of our garden. We discontinued the ditch irrigation. Each spring the Boss Farmer, Mr. Caton, sent to each school two bags of seed potatoes and many other kinds of seeds. There was a note with the potatoes saying, "Be sure and put these potatoes in." He meant for us to eat them as had been done for years. Gardens were never put out at any other school until after we began.

I never saw such large yields of tomatoes, cabbage celery and potatoes. The potatoes were so many in a hill

Ice Project

and so large that when I plowed them out I had to step on potatoes. The celery grew two feet tall and cabbages weighed eight to fourteen pounds. The Farmer came down to get some tomatoes. He filled a hundred pound grain sack in just a few minutes from a very few tomato plants. Mr. Caton told me he had no idea such crops could be raised in such an arid country. The school children did not care for tomatoes at first, but they learned to like them so well they would eat a small washtub full of them a day, in the season.

We added a baked potato to the Government lunch each day so long as the potatoes lasted. The Indians liked wag mu span sni (pumpkins to eat raw), or what we call watermelons. We would bring them to the school yard by the wagon load.

In later years it has occurred to me that there should have been much said and done about our four years' work at Lower Cut Meat Creek Indian School, but forty-five years later my wife and I made a trailer trip to Rosebud and it was very plain to be seen that not only the schools, but some of the Indians had adopted my methods and were raising irrigated crops on their allotments.

The first year we were at Rosebud we were given orders to oversee the bathing of all our school children. On Monday mornings I sent the girls to the sewing room where Mrs. Bratley oversaw the bathing of the girls, while I took the boys into the carpenter shop. With three tubs in each place and with the help of the older pupils we soon put the younger children through and on up until they all had their baths.

If I remember correctly, in 1898 an exposition was put on at Omaha, Nebr. A band of Sioux was a part of the exhibit. Chief Turning Eagle from our camp was one sent, but before he would go he persuaded the Indian Agent to release his fourteen year old daughter, Kitty, from school to watch his cows. Kitty was out of school four months. When the Fair ended she reluctantly came back to school and with her hair full of nits. I sent Kitty out to the sewing room for Mrs. Bratley to inspect her hair and each morning my wife reported that the nits were still there. The penalty was for us to cut her hair short or send her to the Agency with the Policeman and have it cut there. The fourth day I told Kitty she must come to school the next morning with her hair free from nits, or I would send her to the Agency with Search-the-Enemy-Out, the policeman.

The next morning was cloudy and chilly. After I rang the big bell on the roof, all the children were soon in their seats. I sent Kitty out for inspection. I called the first class, which lined up at the back of the room. I noticed, through a west window, several Indian heads sticking up from the back of the hill, and saw others with big eagle feathers in their hair and big blankets drawn around them, sticking their heads up from behind the woodpile. I had no idea of what was coming. I thought they wanted a pow-wow with me, or wanted me to add a new born babe's name to a ration card. I saw the last Indian through the vestibule and east window. I was sitting in my teaching chair, with my left arm resting on the table directly under the bell rope. My right arm was around our three year old son, Homer, and I was holding a text book in my right hand. All of a sudden, Chief Turning Eagle, in war bonnet, paint and feathers, entered the school room from the vestibule, with a war club in his upraised hand. He sprang at me and I am sure would have driven the club into my skull had it not been for two things: first, he was afraid he would strike Na ta Ska (Homer); and second, his daughter Kitty sprang from her seat half way back in the room, with outstretched arms. She rushed forward, begging her father not to strike me. He did not strike. Homer's presence saved my life. He was not in the school room much during school hours.

I had the Indian policeman take Turning Eagle to the Agency where he was placed in the guardhouse and fed on bread and water for a few weeks. Kitty's aunt, her father's sister, asked for one more day to clean Kitty's hair. I granted her request, and Kitty came back the next morning with a clean head of hair—and it was kept clean thereafter.

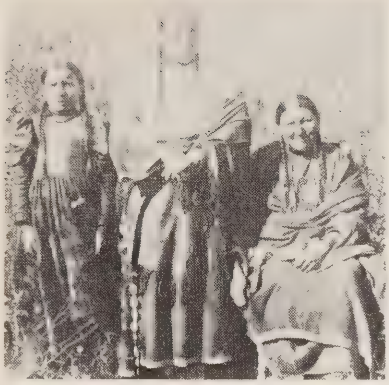
The same year the Indians killed the teacher at Milk Creek Camp School, one hundred and ten miles east of the Agency.

Each year we had a new class enter school. We had to cut the little boys' hair, take their Indian camp clothes, bath them and dress them up in school clothes. Next we gave them a first name, retaining their father's Indian name for their surname. In our time we have named many Indian children.

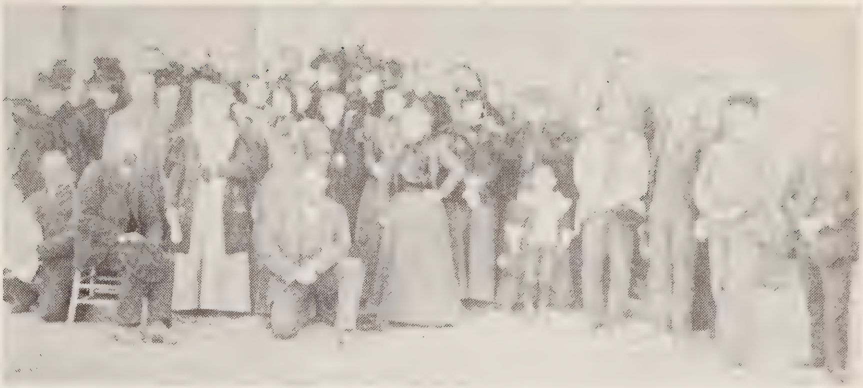
One time when I was bathing the boys in the shop, I noticed a very white spot on the right thigh of Sammy Plenty Holes, a six year old boy. I asked him what caused the white spot. He said, "I was shot." The bullet passed through his leg where the two white spots showed. I inquired of the mother, Mrs. Plenty Holes, how it all happened. She said that she, with Sammy, nearly one year old, was in the Wounded Knee Battle. This took place December 29, 1890; three hundred or more Indians were killed, and thirty one soldiers. A terrific blizzard was coming on as the battle took place. The dead and wounded were covered with the drifting snow, and lay there three days before search parties reached them. Mrs. Howling Elk, who received thirteen bullet holes, lay, with her wounded baby, for three days in the snow—and both survived. Sammy's mother changed her name to Plenty Holes on account of the thirteen wounds. Wounded Knee Battle on Wounded Knee Creek was the last battle the Sioux took part in.

Chauncey Yellow Robe was sent to Carlisle and well educated, so he became Superintendent of the Rapid City Boarding School. One of his daughters, Evelyn, was an English teacher at Vassar College, a woman's college. Chief Yellow Robe and his wife were a fine pair of Indians, who had seven sons. Joseph, the youngest, was in our school; the oldest, Search the Enemy Out, was one of our policemen. He was an extra good one.

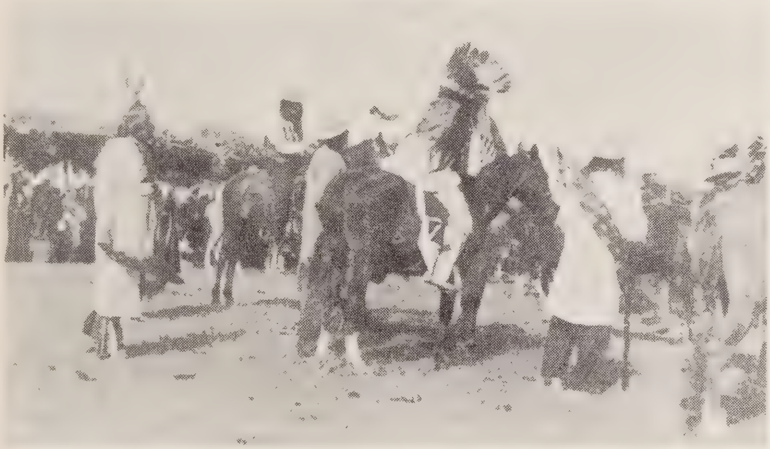
Friday nights, during the winter season, a dance was held which would end around midnight, after a big meal of boiled dog. Wife and I attended a few dances when we first went there, just to see how it was done.



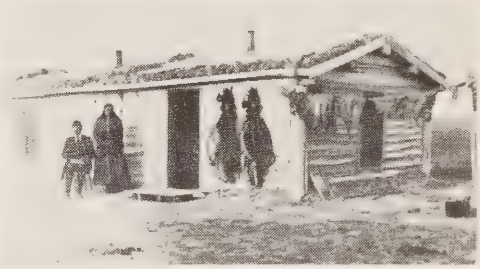
Three Daughters of Goes to Wars, 1897



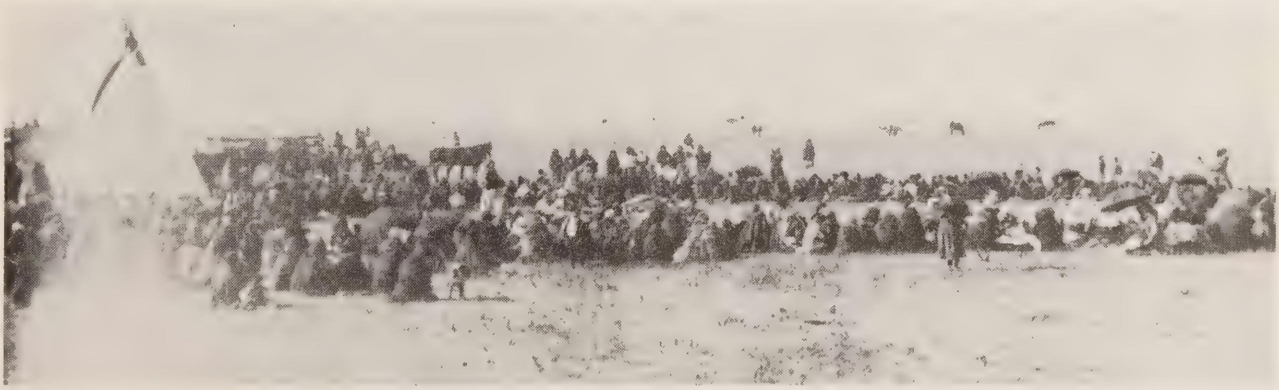
Teachers and Housekeepers of Indian Day Schools of Rosebud Reservation in 1897



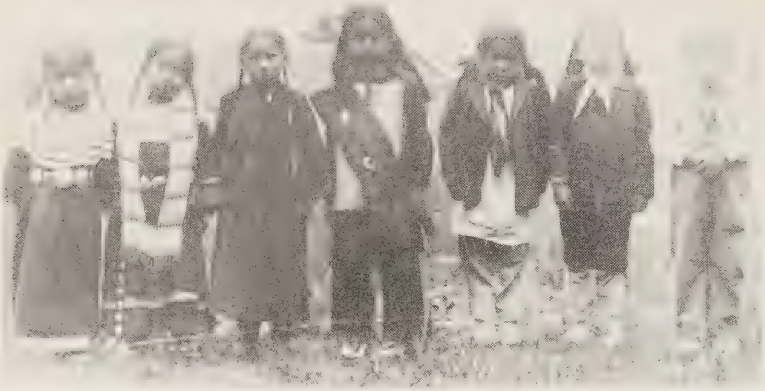
Giving Away Horses, Sioux, 1897



Solomon Elk and Wife, and Their Home

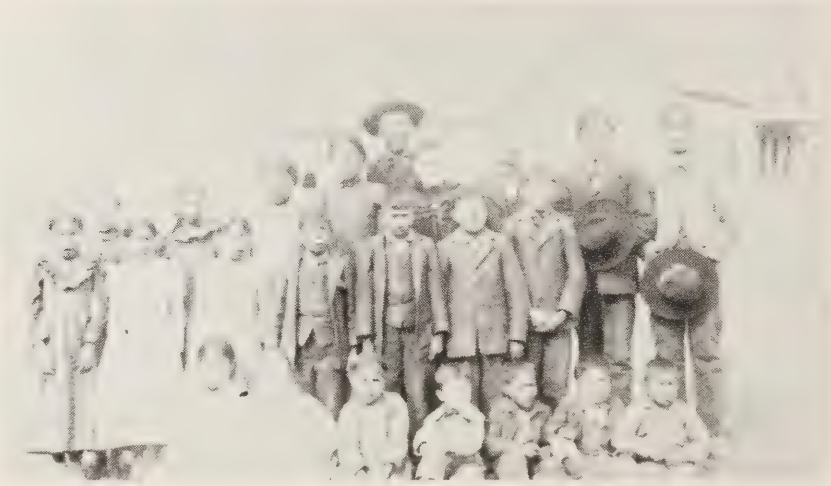


Sioux Episcopal Convocation, 1897. Squaws Meeting. Camping Circle, Three Miles.

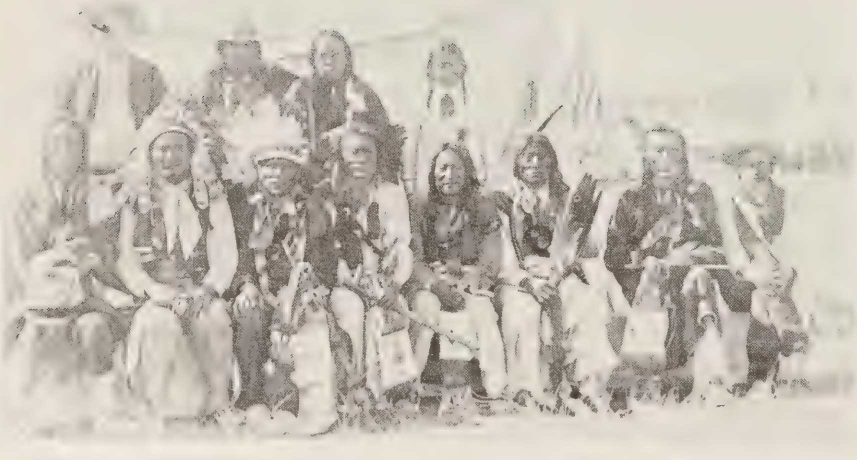


**Little Sioux Before Entering School, 1897. From left to right:** Cora Search the Enemy, ( ? ) Good Kill, Lucy Kills Plenty, John Under the Water, Willie Good Bird, Paul Grey Eagle Tail, Allen Otterman.

**He Dog Creek School. Mr. and Mrs. Arthur McFatridge, Policeman and Pupils. Schoolhouse in rear.**



Pictures Taken Between 1895 and 1899
by J. H. Bratley



**Patrons of Lower Cut Meat Creek Indian Day School, Rosebud, S. D. Standing, left to right:** George Steed, Chief Elk Teeth, Chief Otterman, Horn. **Seated:** One-Wood, With Horns, Yellow Cloud, Chief Grey Eagle Tail, Chief Turning Eagle, Fast Dog, Pulls the Arrow Out, and James Kills Plenty.

Mr. and Mrs. Whitwell at Upper Pine Creek School

It was a pretty wild affair to us at first. The men dancers were dressed in buckskin breech-cloths, jingling bells, paint and feathers only. Some five or more men would sit around an Indian drum in one corner of the room and beat it. The drum was made from a section of cottonwood tree, hollowed out until only a thin outer shell was left. The open ends were covered with green rawhide, and when dry had a wonderful ring (tone). I have an Indian drum in my collection.

While we were among the Sioux we added several hundred pounds of Indian curios to our collection. The curio I prize most, from the Sioux, is Swift Bear's winter count, covering 100 years of history. In 1898 I sent a Sioux-made saddle to the Bureau of American Ethnology for the Smithsonian Institution. Under date of March 16, 1898, I received a very grateful acknowledgement, it was to be known as acquisition 33315.

**Sioux Sewing Girls at Lower Cut Meat Creek Camp Day School. Seated, left to right:** Gracie Good Bird, Emma and Essie Elk Looks Back (sisters). **Standing,** Maggie Otterman, Rosa Elk Teeth, Nellie Foot, Kitty Turning Eagle.

# A Postmaster of Norris in Washabaugh County

**By Roy Brazell**

(Before the west boundary line of Mellette County was moved farther west, the town of Norris, a post office and store, was listed on all legal papers and maps as being in Washabaugh County. Mellette County boundary lines were created in 1909. But before the county was officially organized, it took quite a bit of explaining and correspondence with Washington, D. C. to get the location of Norris legally changed, on paper, to Mellette County. Official documents in my possession, from Washington, D. C., show that it was Roy Brazell who brought this to the attention of the Postmaster General, and had this information recorded properly.) W. R.

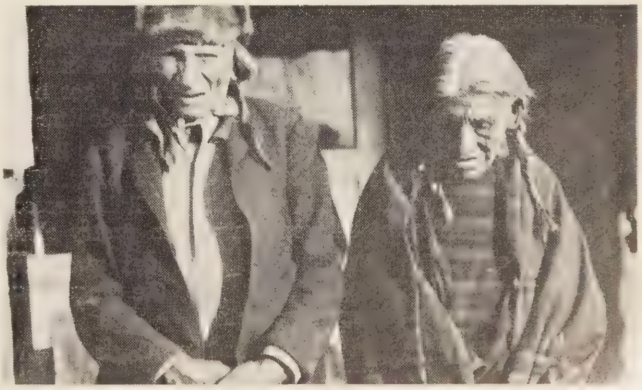
Roy (Bob) Brazell writes: In the Fall of 1912, I believe, I first went to the Black Pipe Issue Station to assume management of the general store and Post Office (which was situated in the corner of this Trading Post and called "Norris.") The big annual fair at Rosebud was just opening. It was an event that everybody attended and I do mean **everybody,** including women, children, spare horses, dogs and also canvas tents and teepee poles!

The owner of the Trading Post, Reuben Quick Bear, a well educated, full-blooded Sioux Indian, who was a chief of some consequence and had made several trips to Washington, D. C. in the interests of his tribe, wanted to go, too.

He hastily showed me how to open the safe, went over the stock and prices with me, gave me the keys to the "spread." Then he, too, joined his impatiently waiting entourage. They all got into the loaded squaw wagon and took off for the fair!

With the exception of the star route driver who brought in the mail from Belvidere once a week, I saw no English speaking person for the next five days. My knowledge of the Sioux Indian language at that time was nil. A big, deaf Indian policeman, Black Bear, helped me acquire a hasty smattering of the Sioux language by taking various items from the shelves and telling me over and over, the Indian names for them. Then he did the same thing with the coins from the till. An old Indian couple, too feeble to go to the fair, Crow Head (Kangi-Pa) and his wife, Good Dog (Sunka Waste), also helped me materially with this education.

The Boss Farmer in charge of the Issue Station at that time was Mr. I. D. Kephart, formerly of Deer Lodge, Montana. There was no doctor, as such, nearer than the Rosebud Agency. A field matron—and she was a good one—took care of the sick and injured. She was Miss Lottie G. Rasch, who made her rounds where she was needed, winter and summer, with a pair of spotted ponies and a top buggy.



Crow Head and His Wife, Good Dog

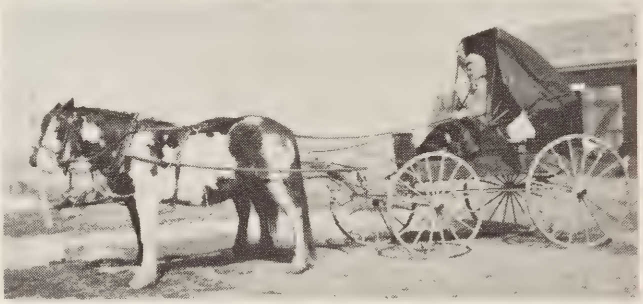
There was a small log structure between the field matron's cottage and the Issue Station which was used for schooling the three or four white children and about the same number of Indian youngsters who were eligible. This school was in charge of a charming young lady by the name of Mildred Harrison from White River.

Merchandise for the store was brought in by Indian freight wagons from the railroad at Belvidere. When the Big White River was "up" at the fording place near the Thode ranch—no bridges in those days—the goods would be ferried across. They utilized the current for power by means of a system of cables, ropes and pulleys.

Sometimes Mr. Quick Bear would borrow for me a really big, bay saddle horse, known locally as "Walking Johnnie," so that I might ride to Belvidere, about thirty-five miles north of Black Pipe, and pick up several thousands of dollars in small denomination currency. We used this to cash the Indian's checks at the time of the irregular per capita payments. Incidentally at such times we collected accounts due. My trips usually were made "between suns," arrangements having been made with our banker as soon as we learned of time and amount of payment. This amount was very often $30.00 per head, including children.

Roy is my given name but Bob is my nickname by which I am better known. I was well liked by the Indians and was taken into their Tribe, or whatever that old ceremony was. I was given four Indian names commemorating some former chiefs: "Short Bull," "Owns The Rattle," "Chasing Bug" and "Skunk Coat," or "Shirt."

I never cheated them, never short-changed them and never lied to them. I did volumes of credit business with them at the Trading Post and never lost a dime in bad accounts.



Miss Lottie Rasch, Indian Field Nurse

# The Stork and the Homestead

**By Mrs. Florence Brodball**

One very cold, blizzardy day, on March 1, 1915, to be exact, my brother, Ben Smith and I, were very cosily sitting by the fire on the homestead in South Dakota. My husband, Eric Brodball, had left quite early for the town of White River where we owned a bank.

The blizzard was getting worse and it was getting colder, when we heard a knock on the door. Our first thought was that someone was looking for shelter from the storm. We hurriedly opened the door and there stood Jay Pearsall, a neighbor homesteader. He came in and his first words were, "Have you any baby clothes that you can spare?"

As Jay was a bachelor, I was quite surprised at the question and said, "What do you want with baby clothes?" He then told us that some other neighbor homesteaders, the Chris Buums, had a new baby girl. It seemed the stork had left her without any luggage. He had also forgotten to notify Mrs. Buum. Having lost my first baby just a month before, I was able to fix up a a bundle of necessities quickly. As Jay rode off, I told him I would come over and help the Buums, what little I could, if they couldn't get better help.

In less than an hour, Chris was at our place with a team and spring wagon. I told Ben I would be back in a day or two. It was ten days later when I got back home. It had snowed day and night the whole time.

The Buum family consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Buum, a daughter, Ruth, four years old, and the new baby. They had a small two room house, similar to all homestead houses, and the five of us were packed in pretty close.

It kept snowing and storming so bad, day after day, we ran out of fuel. Chris had to chop up the fence posts which he had ready for spring fencing.

After a week we ran out of food, so Chris rode to town on horseback. It was still snowing but the wind had died down. There, Chris saw Eric and told him all the news from the homesteads. Eric had been staying in town with his mother through all the blizzards. He insisted on Chris taking our horse and buggy, which Eric had driven in the first day of the storm, so he could take Lizzie Tomsik home with him to help out.

Chris and Lizzie started out, with Chris's saddle horse tied behind the buggy. About half way home, our poor little horse Charlie couldn't pull the buggy through the deep snow any more. Then Chris and Lizzie had to help push the buggy through the drifts the rest of the way home. They were soaked when they got there. I stayed a couple days after Lizzie came. On the tenth of March it quit snowing so I drove our horse and buggy back home. Chris rode along on horseback in case we got stuck in the snow.

When I got home I found a note from Ben saying he had gone to town on foot for supplies. He came about an hour later with a pack on his back. Eric caught a ride home with a farmer that evening.

Quite a lot had happened since March first.

The story I just told is one of the many experiences that I had while we were living on our homestead in 1914-1915. I believe Buums named the baby Shirley.

I remember that my husband and I moved to White River in September 1913. We came to Winner by train, stayed all night there and came out on the stage the next day. Harry Hight was the stage driver. We stayed in town that winter and moved to the homestead in May 1914. We were five miles from White River. Red Shirt was our closest neighbor.

When we moved back to town we built a house directly across the street from the Catholic church. I hope it is still there.

Eric, my husband, was a charter member of the Masonic and Odd Fellow lodges, and I, a charter member of the Eastern Star.

My three children were born in South Dakota. The

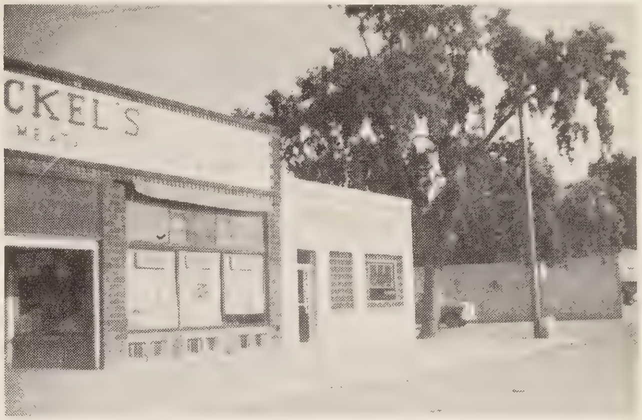
**Dick Kerlin and Olea Brodball, White River, May 1918**

girls in White River and my son in Winner. I have ten grandchildren.

The first winter we were in White River, Eric had a cottonwood tree planted on the bank corner. He had Charlie Marshall haul it up from the river. It had about a ton of frozen dirt around the roots. I hope it is still living.

Sometime I hope to go back to White River and see all the old landmarks.

There are several people from White River in the Los Angeles area. We have a get-to-gether about twice a year. The last one was in October 1960. We had a surprise party on Fritz Lyons on his birthday. Besides Fritz and Angie Lyons, there are Mrs. John Sullivan Mrs. Ben Brier, Mrs. Ben Smith. Bud and Carrie Kent, Mable Kent Holmes, Floyd and Esther Eaton, living near here.



**The tree Mrs. Brodball tells about in her story, still growing at the street corner by Farmers State Bank. (The first bank burned. W. R.)**

# Cherry-Picking Days

**By Thelma Bucholz**

My sister, Donna Faye, and I, grew up on a ranch six miles north of White River. Our parents, Mr. and Mrs. Mads Nielsen, still make their home on that ranch.

Our children, Karen and Sharon Bucholz, and Betty and Candy Stromer, (children of my sister, Mrs. Bud Stromer) love to hear stories of the things that happened during our childhood, just as we like to hear of our Mother and Father's younger days when they moved to Mellette County.

Our children tell us that they wish that they had lived in those days, when there were lots of cows to milk, horses to ride, cobs and wood to be gathered every night and water to carry. Children of today have a much easier life.

How well I remember the berry picking times, when Mother, Donna and I would get on "Fannie" our horse, and ride for miles and miles to gather a few chokecherries. Then we would ride home with "puckery" mouths because we had sampled the raw chokecherries.

**Mrs. Thelma Bucholz and daughters, Sharon and Karen, 1960**

But it was worth it, as Mother could make the best pudding from those wild chokecherries.

The winters were bad though with that long-legged underwear people wore those days. We weren't allowed to take them off, for good until the first of May. However, when the first of April came, we would roll them above our knees, then roll our long stockings down, when we got to school.

There were times when the roads were impassable for the Model A, so Daddy would come after us with the team and wagon. How we enjoyed riding in a lumber wagon!

**Branding at Dad's (Mads Nielsen) 1960**

We have been living in Jones County for the past seven years, where I have been teaching school. I still think of Mellette County as home.

(Since writing this, Bucholz' bought a ranch and again live in Mellette County. W. R.)

# Cody Post Office

### By Mrs. Cody Sinning

Cody Sinning the first, last and only postmaster of Cody, S. D., received his appointment from U. S. Postmaster General Albert S. Burleson, June 12, 1913. The Post Office was located on the Sinning homestead SE 30 42-27.

The mail was carried between Cody and Wood twice a week. Will Egleston, the first mail carrier, made a delivery on Saturdays and the Postmaster brought it on Tuesdays.

Later carriers were Will Smith, Ernest Hamilton and Gust Gunner.

This Office and a small country store were housed in the same building.

It served between 25 and 30 families as an exchange station for mail, a chance to get a few groceries between trips to town, and a local social center.

In the spring of 1923, a daily rural route from White River was established, and the Cody Post Office was officially closed December 5, 1923, after serving the community for ten years, six months and three days.

And so another "Ghost Post Office" was added to the fast growing list in Mellette County.

(Note: There were over 18 such ghost postoffices in the early days when roads and means of transportation were poor. See Book 1, "Mellette County Memories," for list and dates of all ghost postoffices and towns. Cody, S. D., was "our" postoffice. One of my happiest childhood memories is of walking over the hill (my folks homesteaded the quarter west) to Sinnings to get the very welcome mail.... In 1962 there are five official Post Offices in Mellette County—Cedarbutte, Mosher Norris, White River and Wood. W. R.)

I (Alice Boyden) came to S. D. in May 1916 to spend the summer on my father's claim and found Mellette County a fascinating place to spend a vacation.

With Cody Sinning, I visited friends, went to Wood, Murdo, White River and Winner to shop. And at that time traveling over some of those trails, was a real adventure. We attended rodeos, celebrations, picnics and neighborhood gatherings and met many wonderful people who later became good friends of ours.

In late August I returned home to Green Bay, Wisc., and taught school another year.

On June 16, 1917, Cody and I were married in Milwaukee, Wisc., and came back in July to make our home on Cody's homestead.

In the next 15 years, three daughters, Marie, Florence and Jean came to complete our family circle.

**Mr. and Mrs. Cody Sinning and daughters, Marie, Florence and Jean**

During that time Emily Johnson (now Mrs. Wayne Sanderson of Murdo) lived with us for three years. And her brother Carl stayed here and went to school one year.

The children brought the usual interests into our lives—Sunday School, 4-H and school activities, hobbies and young friends.

After Marie graduated from high school at Lennox, S. D., she attended Dubuque University one year; worked as Deputy County Treasurer of Mellette County for nearly two years; then graduated from Nettleton Business College in Sioux Falls where she worked as a stenographer.

Florence graduated from the School of Nursing at McKennen Hospital, Sioux Falls, and has worked as an

**Cody Post Office and Ranch (Cody Sinning at right) 1913**

**Mr. Kimball and Mr. Steiner with two coyotes they shot. Taken at Cody Sinning's house, when we got the mail there.**

R. N. in various hospitals, in Minnesota and Texas where she is still in the nursing profession.

After high school graduation in White River, Jean worked in the Bell Telephone Office there.

The children grew up here, then married, and made homes of their own. We now have six wonderful grandchildren.

Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Kary (Jean) and their four children, Ace, Brant, Rae Beth and Anita Fran, live near Norris, S. D.

Mr. and Mrs. Otto Ramsborg (Marie) and daughter, Alice, live at Valley Springs, S. D.

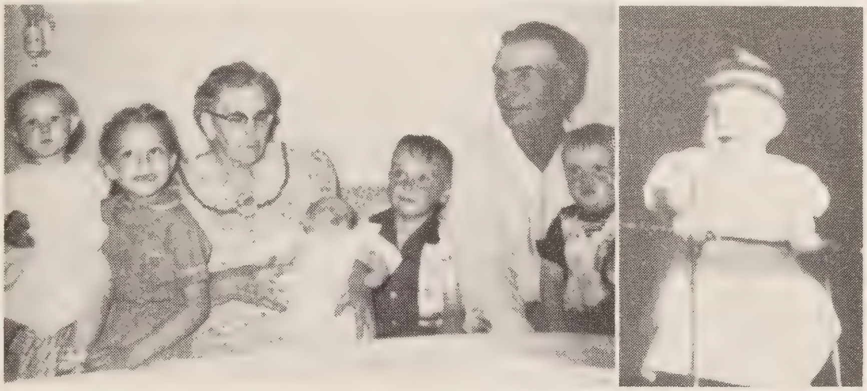
Mr. and Mrs. Neil Strickland (Florence) and daughter, Luan, make their home at Lamesa, Texas.

We enjoyed the usual pleasure of genial neighborhood gatherings, and endured the hardships of war shortages, dry weather and pioneering in a new country, as did our neighbors and friends.

If the old saying "that the first one hundred years are the hardest" is true, we are well on the way to much easier and better times.

In the meantime, we are still living on the old homestead where we have been for nearly forty-five years.

(Note: Cody Sinning is one of the few Mellette County homesteaders still living on his original homestead and at the same location. He was also born in Dakota Territory so was awarded an Honorary Dakota Territorial Citizen's Certificate during the recent Centennial Celebration. W. R.)



**Mr. and Mrs. Cody Sinning and their grandchildren: Alice Ramsborg, Luan Strickland, Rae Beth, Ace, Brant, and Anita Fran Kary.**

# The Collins Story

**By C. E. Collins**

Mrs. Collins and I homesteaded in western Mellette County in April 1916. Dan Hutcheson and family, William Hennings and I moved out from Dallas, S. D., with teams and wagons. Mr. Hutcheson had twenty-eight head of cattle and we had fifteen cows and heifers. I had a hay rack loaded with farm machinery, with a space built in the back to haul little calves that were too young to walk. It took us two weeks to travel the one hundred-eight miles.

There were no roads at that time. After we left Carter we only crossed one bridge, that was west of White River about a mile. Although there was a bridge across the Little White River at that time, we forded the river as the cattle would be easier to handle that way.

Mr. Hutcheson had a shack 8 x 16 built on his wagon and all he had to do when he got to his homestead was to set the house off and he was home. His livestock was used to following that house and so they stayed around with very little trouble until he built a fence.

We left our cattle at George Dengler's until we fenced a pasture and built a house. We hauled our lumber from Belvidere. No roads, no bridges, just a trail and we forded the Big White River at Hans Thode's place. When the river was high it would swim a horse. There was a cable across the river from bank to bank with a boat swinging on pulleys. And you left your team on one side and crossed by way of the cable. I remember one time we swam four carloads of cattle across. Mr. Thode swam his milk cows across and met us. Then his cows led the herd back. When I see Raw Hide on T.V. it reminds me of that time.

Al Van Lear and Ben Dengler helped us shingle the house, 16 x 36, and they asked if I would give a dance before we put in the partitions. I told them sure, if they could get music and a crowd. It was 25 miles to White River and about 30 miles to Belvidere and few houses

Collins Homestead in the Badlands, 1916

between here and either river. There were 78 people at the dance and only a few that I knew. Everybody brought their own lunch of sandwiches and cake. That was the custom of that time—if you heard of a dance you went to it whether you knew the people or not.

The average homesteader in western Mellette County was of moderate means but if he had the money he would buy better land than the first land opened for homestead. So we were all about on a par. New settlers in a new country anxious to make new friends.

At the start most of them had a buggy and driving team, but a buggy or spring wagon setting out in the hot sun only lasted about two years. The (iron) tires got loose and (wooden) spokes wore out. So most of the people went back to lumber wagons.

The majority of the first houses were called Tar-paper shacks, quite a few were log houses, a few sod houses and some mud or adobe houses.

One wonders now how so many people made a living. They all had big gardens, milked a few cows, had a few pigs and seemed to be, if anything, happier than people are now.

Jess Beckwith had a store and post office at Cedar Butte, also bought cream and eggs. Paul Putnam had a store at Norris. Mr. Kephart, the Boss Farmer, had the post office at the Indian Issue Station; the Indians called it Black Pipe.

The following are some of the homesteaders and early settlers that I remember around Cedar Butte: August, Charlie, Albert, Martin, Lillie and Martha Anderson, Tom, Cleve, Claude, Nye Berry and two Berry sisters, Don Brody, Jess Beckwith, Philip Benson, also his father and sister, Mr. Burgman, Bert Butterfield, Etta Cash, Hans and John Christenson, John Caylor, Stanley Callen, Silas, Bill and Doc Counts, George, Ben, Susan and Cap Dengler, the two Dodd boys, Chas. Dano, Frank Dubic, Mr. Daly, Jacob Elwanger, William Elley, Harold Fowler, Jesse Gray, Mort Gresham, Earl Green, Albert Chaney, Joe Fuerst, Dan, Neil, and Paul Hutcheson, David Haughan, David Deutsch, Otto and Carl Jorgensen and father, Hans Holms, Fred Harris, Fred Hansen, Albert and Peter Johnson, Virgil Joslin and father, James Johns, Oswald Jarl, John Graham, Clyde and John Kelly, Henry Keller, Fred Gregar, Bert Hickman, Wm. Hennings, Jim, Joe and Ross Langston, Charles Ladley, Pearl Frazier, Park, Earl and Frank Halligan, Aug. Larson, Olsen Bros., Archie Beard, John Peters, John, Ernest and Clarence Patnoe, Mr. Proctor, Carl, Alex and Hans Peterson, Paul Putnam, Ray Phillips, Jake Pastian, Bill and Lyle Chamberlain, Minnie Steinmeyer, Mike Glynn, Ernest Samuelson and sister Gertrude, Joe Parker, Andrew Qualm, George Railing, Petranek family, Chas. Sharp, George Schueknecht, Wm. and Jack Starkjohann, Emil and John Romm, Herb Stoddard, Ted Thomas, Mr. Tuthill, Al Van Lear, Hal White, Dick, Kye and Frank W. Winchell, Marion Tompkins, Warren Atkinson, Martin Vitch, the Zickrick family, Joe Zacek.

Around Norris there were: Matt Crilly, Harry Hanson, Jess Wilcox, Wm. Kary, Mr. Kephart, August, Henry and Otto Kaufman, Fred and Otto Huber, Clyde and Joe Cannon, Tobias Karlin, Jake Deiss, Albert Richter, Jake Ring, John Winsborg, James Johnson, Bird Patterson, E. Swerigan, Wilfred Totten, Earl, Perry and Charles Keever, Garfield Schelske, Gottlieb and Don Smith, the Weiss family, August Waack and three sons, Wm. and Putt Sammons, Hill family, Harry, Dude, Fred and Chas. Merchen, James Letellier, John Littau, Mike Wimpe.

South of Belvidere were: Jesse Shafer, Zim Amundson, his father and sister, Cornie Utterback, Steve and Ed Estes, Jim Srb, Bill Walker.

Around Farley neighborhood: Goings family, L. C. Bass, August Blumm, Harry Coffee, Claude Gray, Matt Garrett, Shore Hartley, Tolfer Baker, Guy Herbo, Perry Douglas, Mr. Egner, Mae Biser Dill, George Dill, Andrew Kreger, John Safner, Ed and Otto Vollmer, Jake Hofer, Joe McCrorey, M. A. Pinkerton, Clarence Farley, Chas. Mizer, Sam White, Geo. Bear, David Heaton and mother, Geo. Trice, Geo., Earl and Dean McAllister, Ernest, Luther and Mr. Boicourt, Henry Woehl, Hannes Jensen, Jens Jensen.

South of Stamford were: Mr. Arp, Earl Liggett, Leslie Leek, Pratt England, Ray Eveleth, Bill Dolezal, Bechtold family, Sam Manke, Louis and Roy King, Guy Welker, Philip Vollmer, John and Pete Schamber.

Inside of a few years quite a few had proved up on their homesteads and moved on. Western Mellette County is really a cattle country. It has a rather rough and broken Badland ridge that runs north and south nearly the full length of the county. About the only good land was Indian Allotments. So it was on the poorest land where the brave homesteaders filed with the hopes and intentions of making homes of their own. One-half section of land (they could homestead one quarter and later

Mr. and Mrs. Claude Collins, Glen, Emma Ferne and Leila Mae, 1920 on get another quarter when the additional Homestead Act was passed) wasn't quite rough land enough to make any money raising cattle and, if level, very little farm land. Later there were three straight years of dry weather and grasshoppers, in the early thirties, that wiped most of them out (that hadn't already left earlier). Most of the early settlers that followed the homesteaders, if they had some money, bought Indian land or leased more acres so they could either farm larger or run more cattle.

About all that are left (December 1960) of the homesteaders around Cedar Butte are Joe Fuerst family, one daughter of Cleve Berry's, one son and one daughter of Tom Berry's, and my wife, son and myself.

There has been quite a change in this part of Mellette County in the forty years since I came here. We are a mile and one half from the Black Pipe Creek. Forty years ago there was an Indian Day School at Corn Creek, also five Indian churches within five miles and Indian villages all along Black Pipe Creek. Mostly log houses, but some lived in tents.

The older Indian men wore their hair in long braids. The Indian women, squaws as they called them, all wore shawls or blankets. These they sometimes tied around their shoulders and in them carried the little ones on their backs instead of in their arms. In those days I never heard an Indian baby cry. It is different now. One often sees an Indian child cry, scream or stamp his feet the same as any spoiled white kid when they want something.

When the Indians went visiting they just locked their house, put their cooking and camping outfit with the tent into the wagon and away they went. The squaw and the girls sat in the back of the wagon on the blankets on the floor and the men rode in front on the seat. The young boys usually rode on ponies along side. And usually three or four dogs following. In fact it seemed like there were always as many ponies and dogs as there were boys.

Following are some of the names of the Indians that lived along the Black Pipe Creek at that time: Joe Ashley, Black Bear, Quick Bear, Sleeping Bear, Standing Bear, Bull Tail, Chasing Horse, White Horse, White Feather, Skunks Father, Stands For Them, Shoots At Him, Runs Close To The Village, Singing Goose, Big Owl, Mouseau, Landeau, Wooden Knife, Little Brave, Little Dog, Leading Cloud, Looking Cloud, Yellow Cloud, Night Chase, Medicine Blanket, Little Crow, Eagle Bear, White Mouse, Flying Horse, Dark Face and First In Trouble

Our closest neighbors have nearly always been Indians. Most of our hired help have been Indians. When I'm in town and I meet any of the older Indians, they seem pleased to see me. Sometimes I think I am a kind of a white-haired landmark to them. Most of the Indian people are politicians and take a great interest in elections. Contrary to what most people think, they know how to vote and what they are voting for. I think that the rank and file of white voters either vote straight Republican or Democrat, and think everything and everybody are all good, or that all are bad of the opposite party. I think it is different with the Indian voter; they always have a reason for voting for whom they vote for.

During the last two wars, very few Indians of draft age, that were qualified, waited to be drafted. Many volunteered and as I understand, made good soldiers.

Forty-five years ago there were no cemeteries in the western part of Mellette County. When the first few deaths occurred, the bodies were usually buried at some location on the homestead. When Mrs. Benson died, Philip Benson deeded a parcel of land north of where the Cedar Butte store and post office was at that time, as a cemetery. Then the neighborhood fenced it and had it laid out in lots. The bodies that were buried in most

I remember one time I rode over to Cedar Butte for the mail. Quite a bunch of people had gathered there and were starting for a funeral. Burgman's infant baby had passed away and was to be buried that afternoon. It was of the different places were then moved to this cemetery.

snowing at the time and they all wanted me to go along to help with the singing. I did not have time to go back home and change clothes. When we arrived at the cemetery, it was storming a little harder. The minister had still not arrived. We waited quite a while but that minister never showed up. The mother was quite broken up with grief and insisted we have some kind of a service for her baby. We were a bunch of newly married people. The extent of our participation in religious services was only singing hymns. To pacify the mother we agreed to go ahead and do the best we could. We canvassed the bunch but no one would volunteer to lead in prayer. Mrs. Burgman had a Swedish Bible but that didn't help any of us. One of the hymn books had a few scripture lessons in the back. We picked out one and agreed to repeat The Lord's Prayer. They picked me to lead. We sang a song, read the obituary, then read the scripture lesson. But instead of pacifying the mother she seemed to feel worse. So we sang another song, and while we were singing, I thought maybe if I would say a few words it might help. I started in by saying something about the innocence of infant children. As soon as I started talking, the mother became quieter and was listening. I can't remember what I said but kept talking on, watching the changing expression on the poor woman's face. One can imagine how I felt, trying to preach a funeral in a passable dirty duck coat, overalls, felt boots and a week's growth of whiskers. I always felt I was doing a Christian act, even if I didn't profess religion.

The preceding story is an example of what the homesteaders and early settlers went through. People find out they can do a great many things they never thought of doing, when the chips are down and they are forced into doing them.

It usually took two days to make the trip to Belvidere and if you had a load or part load, you drove four horses and let them trot most of the time.

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I remember one time shortly before Christmas I went to Belvidere for a load of coal. Usually we tried to get to town in time to load up that day and be ready to start back early next morning. When I got to Belvidere, the lumber yard was closed and it was nearly noon the next day before I left for home. I had a water tank standing up in the wagon, a ton of coal, ten spools of barbed wire and a hundred and fifty steel posts. At the top of the river hill the road was rather slick and, as my horses were not shod, I had to unload the wire and posts about 100 feet from the hill top. It took some time to carry these the rest of the way and reload, so I only got about half-way home before dark. When you are out after dark with a team of horses, one really depends on them to keep on the road and take you home. That night it was really dark and somewhere the team left the road. When I noticed we were not in the road, I got out to look. No trail any place. So I unhitched the team and fed them. I started to search in the direction that I thought the road should have been. I had not gone very far until I came to two trees that were sort of a land mark.

Then I knew where I was so I started back to where I thought I had left the wagon. I had not walked very far until I found myself back to the trees again. By now it had started to snow and I could see a little better. I started out again. I had not gone very far this time until I noticed something moving along beside me. At first I thought it was our dog that always followed, then I noticed it was a coyote. That gave me an idea—I called the dog. He came from a different direction than I figured the wagon was in, but I followed him back to the wagon. I was still intending to go look the other way for the trail, but about that time the wind changed and from then on until daylight we had a snow storm that was one of our South Dakota Specials.

I crawled up in the wagon. The water tank broke some of the wind, but the snow whipped around and it fell in my lap. I had a duck coat, a fur overcoat, felt boots and two heavy quilts. I got the dog up in the wagon with me under the quilts. The dog kept me from freezing, but I was shaking all the time. I kept shifting him around from my back, to my knees and my feet.

The storm let up at daylight. I could see we were only about a hundred yards off the trail. We had about 6 inches of snow.

It was noon when I got to Herb Stoddard's place. He said, "I bet you haven't had any breakfast."

I told him, "Not since yesterday morning."

He yelled to his wife: "Mom, stir up some pancakes."

And so ended a pioneer's adventure on a dark night in a Dakota snow storm!

I also remember that Etta Cash Navin was our first school teacher. The school was held in Susie Dengler's homestead building.

# History of the David Deutsch Family

**By Mathilda Deiss**

David Deutsch was born in South Russia in 1886. He, with his wife Christina and two children, Reinhold and Marie, came to America in November of 1907.

They lived in Gregory County until the spring of 1916, when they decided to homestead in Mellette County. In May, Mr. and Mrs. Deutsch, with their five children, left Gregory County taking three wagons, thirty cows, some chickens and a couple of dogs. Mrs. Deutsch's father, Frederick Littau, came with them and homesteaded in Mellette County also.

**Dave and Christina Deutsch**

The first day they moved 25 miles but the second day they only made 10 miles as it started to rain. They stopped at the John Wonnenburg place until the rain quit. When they tried to start on again the ground was so wet they got stuck in the gumbo. The wheels on the hayrack picked up wet gumbo until they got so big that they couldn't turn. The roads from there on were just wagon trails. Dad had been out to Mellette County earlier when he came to pick out his homestead (W½ 21 41-31) and he said, "Just keep on going West."

When we came to the big hills we had to hitch four or six horses on one wagon and pull it over that hill, then go back and get another one. Dad drove a team on a wagon that was loaded with machinery. Grandfather Littau had in his wagon nine calves, one hog and some equipment. Mother drove the team on the hayrack which was loaded with furniture, beds, stove, cupboard, chairs, clothing, food, chickens, pups and kids. They had a tent over the top but when it rained hard the water soaked through and everything got wet.

Underneath the hayrack bed were one hundred hens. Mr. Galster had told Dad to bring plenty of hens because they were high priced out here. He was in Mellette County in 1914 when Dad came out to see the land. Mother sold most of her chickens for three dollars a dozen but decided to bring 100 along as they were all extra good laying hens. The hens all got wet and after being shut up in the bottom of the rack for two weeks on that trip we didn't get a single egg all summer.

When we got to Clearfield it was raining again, so we stayed at Mike Walters for a few days. Dad turned the chickens out and cleaned out the wagon. What a mess. He scraped out dead chickens, broken eggs, dirt and water.

We started on again, but we got stuck in the sandy hills and again had to put four horses on each wagon to get out. When we got between Wood and Carter we stopped near a haystack. Then it started to rain and snow again so we set up the tent and camped there for three days.

We traveled on again until we got to the Congregational Church (Happy Hollow) east of White River. Mr. Gerig allowed us to use the unfinished church basement. He loaned us a stove and Mother baked us enough bread to last a week. Also we dried out our clothing and bedding.

When we came on past what is now the Pete Nohrenberg place, in the Little Badlands, Dad said, "Our place looks just like these hills. We'll have to use a scraper to level off a place big enough to build a house on."

Sister Marie was so tired and sick she thought she was going to die but she said she wanted to live long enough to see those big hills. Marie was eleven and a half years old, Reinhold was nine, and they drove the cattle on that long trip on foot. They had a pony but they couldn't handle it very well so most of the time they walked all the way from Carlock, south of Dallas, to the homestead in Mellette County, behind those cows.

We arrived at our Mellette County on May 23, 1916. In June we had a hail storm and that was the last rain we had all summer. The grass had grown so rank the summer before that the cows could hardly get to the green grass to graze. Because of the change of climate and feed they didn't give enough milk for their calves, so all of the calves died and some of the cows, too. They put up plenty of hay but it was mostly old hay and there didn't seem to be much nourishment in it.

Dad bought some lumber from the Bohanen Lumber Yard in White River. We lived in a granary all summer but we had lived at first in John Romm's homestead shack until we got a shelter of our own built. We made dugouts in the side of the hill for a barn and a chicken coop. The roofs over these were made with posts and hay. Then they made a 14 x 16 cellar and started to build a house.

When winter came the house wasn't finished; we had to keep the stove going red hot all the time but still we were cold. We were too little to tend the fire while Mother and Dad worked outside so we kids went to bed to keep warm. It got so bitter cold that we finally moved into the cellar. One night a big blizzard came up and drifted the cellar door shut. We thought we might have to hibernate for the winter, but Dad was strong and he put his shoulders under the door and pushed until he could finally crawl out to shovel the snow away from the door. Mother said she wouldn't stay in the cellar another night so they moved their bed back into the unfinished house. Often they had icicles frozen on their eyelashes by morning but we kids stayed in the cellar until they had the house done. Mother says they went through a lot of hard work and trouble before it was all finished.

In 1918 Dad bought a new Model T Ford "convertible" with celluloid windows in the side curtains.

By this time we had a new baby brother, Alfred. We figured he could help us herd the cows but by the time he grew big enough to herd cows, Dad had the land all fenced. However, Reinhold and I herded cows for years on the prairies. We used to kill up to twenty rattlesnakes a day. When we saw one, we'd throw our hat down by the snake and the snake would stay there and watch the hat while we ran to get a stick. Sometimes the stick was just a short one so we had to make sure we killed the snake with the first strike. Luckily, we were never bitten.

Many prairie fires went through the country in those days.

There was plenty of dry wood and sticks along the creek for our fuel so we didn't have to pick up cow chips like most of the homesteaders did.

In 1929 the dry years started and the grasshoppers came. As the years went on the grasshoppers got so bad they ate nearly everything that grew. The Government sent out poison to put out to kill the hoppers. Prices were not very good. We bought barley for 7 cents per bushel and corn for 12 cents. Eggs were 9 cents a dozen and cream was 11 cents per pound. Gas was 25 cents, so it took two pounds of butter to buy a gallon of gas.

Grandfather Littau homesteaded near us. In 1918, Grandmother Littau, Martin, Fred and Selma came out after Grandfather had built a house. Grandmother didn't like it here as there was no water on the place. So in May of 1922 when Grandfather died, then Grandmother and my uncles moved back to Carter. Later they moved back out here and bought the land where John Karlin lives now. Grandmother died in 1944 and is buried beside Grandpa in the Lutheran cemetery by St. John's Church, east of Norris, S. D.

David and Christina Deutsch had ten children, one died in infancy.

Marie, Mrs. Jake Schaeffer, lives on a farm near Valentine, Nebr. They have four children.

**Deutsch Family Reunion, 1942**

**Back row:** Edna, Adolf and Emma Littau, Alfred Deutsch, Leona Schmidt, Elsie Bettcher, Hilda Bendig, Gene Bettcher, David, Edwin and Christina Deutsch, Jake Deiss, Ray Bendig, Tillie Deiss, Marie Schaeffer, Lena Littau, Ida Stegeman, Erna and Ed Hill, Christina Littau. **Middle row:** Donald and Alvina Littau, Leonard Schaeffer. **Front row:** (little folks) Reuben Littau, Harold Deiss, Otto and Susan Littau, Ruth Schaeffer, Tony Littau, Albert and Clara Deiss, Lavina and Alvin Schaeffer.

Reinhold was single and died in 1949.

I, Tillie married Jake Deiss in 1932. Jake came to the U. S. A. from Romania in 1923 where he had served in the Romanian and Russian Army. We have three children: Clara Mueller in Minneapolis has three children; Harold married Linda Hutchinson and lives on a ranch near White River and they have three children; Robert is single.

Hilda Bendig lived in Chicago until 1958 when she and her husband were both killed in an auto accident in Mellette County.

Ida Stegeman, Boyden, Iowa, has four children.

Alfred married Lucille Schmidt, has four children and lives on the home place.

Edwin married Viola Schmidt, has four children and lives in Valentine.

Erna Hill lives east of Norris and has six children.

Elsie Bettcher lived in California until her death in 1960. They had three children.

Leona married Andrew Schmidt, they have six children and live on a farm near Norris, S. D.

Dave and Christina Deutsch retired in 1946 and moved to White River. Dave died in 1947 but Mrs. Deutsch still lives in White River. She has seven living children, thirty-one grandchildren and seventeen great grandchildren.

# The Margie DeRock Story

**By Margie Howlett Jerred DeRock**

My parents are Mr. and Mrs. A. C. Howlett. Father passed away but mother still is in White River.

We lived in the Texsam community in the early years. My brother, Art, and I attended school, taught by Mrs. Frank Brown, in a little red school house which also served as our church. Rev. Van Valkenburgh was the minister, Charles Shouldis, Sunday School superintendent, and Mrs. Charles Astleford was the organist.

At school we studied our lessons hard, then at recess and noon we played hard. We used to go to the T L dam, which was close by. This dam was so named because it was located in the T L Cattle Company range land. We would go skating and would be having so much fun sometimes that we pretended not to hear the school bell right away when the teacher rang it to bring us back to school. The boys sometimes put on little rodeos, and some were real good.

We young folks had no way of going places except on horseback. After attending Sunday School, we would gather at one home for dinner and to visit, then the next Sunday we'd gather at another home. I remember one time on my way home from Findley's, my horse stumbled and threw me over his head. Luckily, I held onto the reins and he didn't run away, nor was I hurt. My pony, Old Joe, would also jump sideways when he heard a rattlesnake. Many times I was almost thrown off when he did this unexpectedly.

**Margie on "Old Joe." Notice divided skirt worn in 1914.**

One time we young folks went to a Fourth of July celebration at Cedar Butte. It was so cold we wore our winter coats and it snowed on us, but we had fun.

(Her sister, Buena, tells the following about that cold Fourth of July celebration in 1915: Mr. and Mrs. Nick Witherow, our folks, and Ira and I, with our daughter, Lucy, went in a wagon with three spring seats. We headed due west of our homestead across country. There was no trail after we left Petraneks.

Margie, the Shouldis girls, the Findley boys and Edgar Witherow had gone ahead on horseback. It got so cold, we would have turned back except that we had the lunch with us for everybody!

We got there at last. It was close to twenty miles. I remember we had a snow squall that afternoon and there were more calls for hot coffee than for lemonade. I saw more fur coats that day than in all my life before. They were not mink either, but cow or horse hide coats. Buena B.)

Margie continues: We had fun once a month at literary meetings, too. Everyone took turns putting on the program. One time my sister and brother-in-law (Buena and Ira Barclay), Frank Findley and I dressed up like negroes and put on a show. Afterwards we had a whistling contest; Daisy Briggs and I tied for the prize. Everyone laughed at our blackened faces.

One time a bunch of young folks went with Buena and Ira down near the Little White River to the dance hall to watch the Indians dance. Others that (I think) went along with us were Nina Shouldis, Frank Perry, Bertha and Floyd Eaton, Oscar Spear, Neta Fry, Bud Hight and I can't remember who else. They tell this story about a lawyer who lived in White River and came from the city. He attended one of these dances and was going to taste the soup the Indians served during dance intermissions. One of the fellows said to him: "Dip deep, the pups are in the bottom!" He turned green and went outside. Later he left White River.

When I was about sixteen, we moved to White River and I worked in the post office for Mr. Dendy. There were so many Indians who could speak no language except their own, it was necessary for me to learn to speak a little of the Sioux language, which I enjoyed doing. I still remember some of it. Frank Perry, who could speak Sioux fluently, helped me learn it. Also Moses Good Voice, a descendent of a chief, helped teach me the language.

Then I was deputy auditor for a year or so. Later I married George Jerred and went back to live in our old neighborhood of Texsam. George purchased a homestead relinquishment from Sam Texter for whom Texsam was named.

We had our share of sickness, broken and cut legs, bumps, bruises and hardships. But looking back, those were the good old days, and I'm glad I had the privilege of living on a homestead.

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### JESUS, GUIDING STAR IN OUR LIVES

The night of sorrows darkens my path
And shuts out the sunshine of day;
I would be alone in this dark, but You
Glow as a star — light the way.
The hour seems too sad to be real
Will power to bear it be mine?
Ah, though deep and dark be my sorrow,
Brightly Your love for me shines.

—Winifred Reutter, 1928

# Homesteading Days

**By Nellie M. (Spear) Didier**

In the year of 1912, my father and mother, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Spear, my sister, Ida, my brother, Oscar, and myself came to White River, S. D. My brother and I drove from O'Neill, Nebr., to White River in a covered wagon, with two mares and their colts. We arrived one afternoon, when the Indians were dressed in their costumes, trimmed with feathers and beads. I hadn't seen very many Indians, but had read about them in history books.

When we arrived in White River, an Indian named Eagle Feather came to shake my hand and to welcome us. I was very frightened, so I jumped from the wagon and ran into my father's store. Bert Humphrey was standing in front of the store and he laughed at me when he saw how frightened I was. Later, when I clerked in my father's store, I became acquainted with many of the Indians. I attended school at White River that fall which helped me to become acquainted with many people.

**Mr. and Mrs. Charles Spear, Ida, Oscar, and Nell, in 1914.**

The next year teachers were scarce, so I went to Spearfish Teacher's College to summer school and took a normal teacher's training course. That fall I taught in a school northwest of White River, known as the Wacek School. I taught in a homestead shack and walked over two miles to school. I stayed with some homesteaders at that time. They were Mr. and Mrs. Lew Barton and Mr. and Mrs. Fred Rucker (both families lived in the same house). The men were working away from home, so the women and children stayed together.

We used wooden orange and apple crates for desks for several months until we could buy desks for the nine pupils that I taught. The next year I went to Huron Teacher's College. That fall I taught the same school and I had thirteen pupils. That term I stayed with Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Boyd, who lived closer to the school. During this time, I was informed that there was a homestead to be contested, as the owner had died. I made application to purchase this homestead, and was lucky enough to get it. It had a 12 x 20 house on it, was mostly all fenced, and a cave dug down in rocks which made it very cool.

In June of 1917 I was married to Nick Didier of David City, Nebr. We moved down on my homestead that fall, which was located 25 miles southwest of White River. I taught school in the Ring Thunder District, which was two miles from my homestead.

We milked eight cows twice a day. I churned 25 pounds of butter each week, which I took to town and sold for 50c per pound. We had to start to town before sunrise in order to get there before the butter melted. We drove a team and buggy then. Sometimes we would stop and visit some of our good neighbors on our way home. One evening we stopped at Marin Georgeff's to visit and to rest our horses. Of course he invited us to stay to supper. He made delicious baking powder biscuits. We had many nice sociable neighbors.

The school I taught was in the vicinity of the ranch where Adolph Petr homesteaded, and which now belongs to Mr. and Mrs. Harold Krogman. I understand he also owns my old homestead and the rattlesnakes, too! The Kasets lived in that vicinity and their boys were my pupils. Rose and Joe Topinka lived near. Rose is now Mrs. Cleve Berry and lives in White River. Joe lives in the Rapid City vicinity.

I can remember the good times as well as the bad. Since our neighbors were so friendly, we would get together at different homes and play cards, dance and sing. I had an organ, so we had several dances at our place. Mr. C. H. Van Schaack would come down and bring his violin and play, while I would chord on the organ. Sometimes we would even have the Kursave Orchestra play for our dances. One hot night we had a dance and quite a few people came out to our place from town. It started to rain so hard that some of the people could not return to their homes. We made beds on the floor. I had to sleep in a baby bed with one of the little ones. I prepared hot biscuits with home-made butter and roasting ears for breakfast, which was really a treat for them. Mr. and Mrs. Bohannon were two of our guests. Everyone had a very nice time.

When Marie and John, the two oldest children, were old enough to attend school, they walked a mile and a half across the creek to the school near the old Plummer place. There was a post office and a store too. Later on the school situation became quite a problem, so we decided to move to town.

My brother and sister, Oscar and Ida, also homesteaded.

We had ten children of whom all are living and married. They all attended the same school at White River that I did. Genevieve, Lucille and Bill graduated from the White River High school. John and Marie still live at White River on ranches. Genevieve lives at Slayton, Minn., Katherine and Lucille reside in Rapid City. Loretta lives in Belle Fourche, S. D., Nick Jr., lives at Hot Springs, S. D., Deloris and Billy are living in San Antonio, Texas. Leona is located at Colorado Springs, Colo.

In 1942 we moved to Rapid City, and I have made my home here. My husband passed away on August 15, 1946.

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The homeliest little old nondescript pooch in the whole wide world — instantly becomes a brilliant dog — when he wags his tail in joyous welcome — just because you spoke to him.

— Winifred Reutter

# The Max Dolezal Story

**By Max M. Dolezal**

Did you ever try to write an article about yourself? It isn't easy. It seems that by the time you cover a few items of your past history, nothing of too great importance has been written.

Originally, I came from Minnesota (where I was born) to Gregory County, S. D., in the winter of 1905. I came with my parents, when they homesteaded on their claim near Burke, S. D.

In 1910, Tripp County was open for homesteading, so I took a homestead near Clearfield, S. D. I built a small house and barn and broke up some of the land. In 1912, I got married and we started our new life together. My wife was born in Bon Homme County, Dakota Territory, where her parents had homesteaded.

We came to our homestead by wagon and went through drouth, dust storms and blizzards. Being far from the railroads, we had to lay in a supply of fuel and groceries early every fall to last through most of the winter. We lived there until 1920, then moved closer to town.

We came to Mellette County in 1933 and lived ten miles south of White River. It was very dry and grasshoppers were plentiful. We moved here, to our present location, just east of White River, in 1935, where we have lived since.

We had four children—John lives close by, is married and has two daughters; Eleanor lives in Minnesota, has one daughter; William is at home. One daughter died in service, as an Army Nurse.

* * *

(Note: Since writing this, Mr. Dolezal passed away suddenly at his home, July 5, 1961. Funeral High Mass was held July 9 at 9:00 A. M. at the Catholic Church in White River. Our sympathy to the family. W. R.)

# My Story

**Mrs. Lucy Mullen Dunn**

In the spring of 1912, Hugh Mullen sold his cattle on the Bar over B 5 ranch on Horse Creek in what was then Lyman County. That was six miles south of Murdo and he with his two daughters, Myrtle and Lucy, and son, Dan, came to the little boom town of White River.

"Honest Hugh," as he was known, opened up a grocery store called the Golden Rule, and his three children went to school in a building on main street.

That was a wet year, I recall, and traveling by team over rainsoaked trails, took two days to make the thirty mile trip. So wet was it, that anyone could pick a hatful of mushrooms which came popping up out of the wet sandy soil. Wild flowers were blooming every place.

Teachers, carpenters, lawyers, druggists and people of all occupations flocked to this community. All had hopes and dreams that the railroad would soon be extended west from Winner. This dream faded when the plans were cancelled.

Business houses opened. One of the first was a bakery and coffee shop by Ada Marshall. The bank, courthouse and two-story school building were completed. School opened in the new building with Mr. Hamilton, principal. Mary Coyle (Wilder), Miss O'Rielly and Myrtle Mullen were the first Teachers.

People lived in tents until their houses were finished. Building was slow because all materials had to be freighted in from railroad towns by team and wagon.

Then trouble broke out and some of the boys enlisted and were sent to the Mexican border and then overseas. Later, World War I was over and peace came to this land.

The only church was a Catholic Mission to the west, overlooking the Little White River. My High Pint, a native Indian, lived close by and looked after the church. Father Grotie, a Catholic priest, came and said mass as often as he could, traveling by team from place to place.

Five decades later, we can return, to find a busy, thriving town and a restful shady park, a memorial to its pioneers.

# Ed Eagle Bear Story

**By Bess Adrian**

Ed Eagle Bear was born in 1891. He never knew his birth date, so when he joined the Army during the first World War they gave him a birth date of June 15. His father came from an Indian Camp located close to where the Oahe Dam is now. His mother's name was White Face Woman. He has four living brothers and sisters.

When Ed was five years old, his brothers came home from the Black Pipe Day school with new clothes which the Government had issued to them at the school. Ed wanted some new clothes, so the next day, he ran away from home and went to school. He was very happy to get some new clothes, too. J. B. Tripp was teaching their school. His wife was the housekeeper and cook. Ed was quite small, so that winter when it was cold, she would keep Ed at the school. He played with the Tripp children so he learned to speak good English.

Ed says there were about thirty children in the school. They were taught through the third grade. The girls were taught home economics and the boys learned shop work and to do chores. After Ed attended there he was sent to the Rosebud Boarding School near Mission, S. D. They only taught the first six grades; Ed went through them and stayed an extra year. In 1907, he went to the Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania, staying there until he was through his sophomore year in 1911. By that time, he had learned the printer's trade. He and two other boys were sent out to this country to work in print shops. Ed was sent to Alliance, Nebr., as the printer of the newspaper there wanted to go out and prove up on his homestead. The country around Alliance had previously been open range but now was being homesteaded. John Runs Close was one of the boys who came out from Carlisle with Ed. He worked in a newspaper office at Stamford, S. D. The other boy went to Pine Ridge and worked in a print shop there.

Ed was employed at Alliance for 18 months. In 1913 he came to White River to work on the Mellette County News. He said it was owned by Collins, Jordan and R. V. Fletcher. Fletcher was also states attorney. The paper was printed in a shop just west of the present Hiatt Drug store. The building faced south. Jess Brown had a store on the corner where the drug store is now.

Ed was at Carlisle School when Haley's comet went east. He remembers that they marched the students out into the athletic field about ten o'clock at night so they could watch it.

He also remembers a prairie fire, one real windy day in about 1914, that started northwest of Norris. There were no fireguards and few fields in a grass country. Within one and one-half hours it had burned down into Nebraska—that would be around 20 miles.

Another incident that happened during another prairie fire in the early days is also recalled by Ed. The Indians of the Potato Creek Camp on the Pine Ridge Reservation, often came over to the Black Pipe Camp to visit. One time when they were there, a fire broke out, up north in the Badlands. The Indian Police came and told everyone to fight the fire. Shortly after they arrived, when the fire was burning up to the top of some of the Badland pinnacles, a whirlwind caused some of the flames to spiral upward toward the sky. The Indians were very superstitious and to them it looked like a giant burning man, and they thought it might be a Fire God going to the Happy Hunting Ground. So they were all afraid and left there and went home.

In March of 1916 Ed Eagle Bear married Kate Looking White. She was born six or seven miles east of Black Pipe in July 1892. She attended the Lower Cut Meat Day School when Mr. and Mrs. Thorne were teaching and keeping house there. Ed and his wife have three sons, Rufus, Joseph and Francis, and a daughter, Mrs. Ada Thompson, who all live close to Norris, S. D.

Ed has worked at the carpenter trade for a number of years. He also likes to paint buildings. He is very dependable and reliable, and he is one carpenter who doesn't watch the clock.

In 1956, Earl Adrians decided to remodel their house in Piedmont, S. D., and Ed Eagle Bear was hired as the carpenter. The job lasted three or four weeks. The people in Piedmont kept asking. "Doesn't that carpenter ever sleep?" Just as soon as it was getting daylight, Ed's hammer or saw started its daily noise and continued until it was dark.

Ed has had to slow down some but still does light carpenter work. He had made crosses for their cemetery and was painting them, for Easter, when he told us his story.

Mrs. Eagle Bear has raised two grandchildren besides her own family. She helps the other ladies of the St. Paul's Episcopal Church make comforters to sell. She told an interesting story of how the bone scrapers that the older Indians used, to scrape the hair off the hides, were made. Elk horns were used with a steel blade tied on one end with raw hide—this tool looks somewhat like a small hoe. Her grandmother had also told her that in the olden times, before the Indians had flour they also scraped off thin shavings from the inside of the hide. These looked like our corn flakes. The Indians used these shavings to thicken the soup or a sort of a pudding they made with ground chokecherries. Ground chokecherries are still sweetened with sugar and enjoyed by the Indians.

The Eagle Bears live just outside of Norris S. D., in the Government Reserve.

# Henry Eagle Bear's Story

**By Bess Adrian**

Henry Eagle Bear, a resident of Norris, S. D., was born in the fall of 1888. He believes it was about in the middle of October, as his mother told him they had gone up to the Badlands to get their winter's supply of wood and Henry was born while they were up there. He went to school to the Black Pipe Day School when he was about five years old. He has a picture taken by John B. Tripp, who was teaching the school in 1894. Henry was the youngest pupil in the picture. Mrs. Tripp was the cook and housekeeper.

Later, Henry went to the Rosebud Boarding School for two years. He was the oldest child of the family so when he was 16 years old, he was kept at home to herd the horses and cattle. Next, he worked for Ben Gerry on the Pine Ridge Reservation. Gerrys lived just northwest of where John Allard lives now. He also worked several years for Mrs. Henry Young and her son. They were pioneers who lived south of Vetal, S. D., along the river. Mr. Young had passed away a few years before. While working at these places Henry broke many horses to work and ride.

In 1917, Henry married Agnes Sore Eyes. They have one son, Russell, who is now married and has a family. They live close to Henry's. Henry and his wife worked for Wm. Kary when Karys first moved to Mellette County. He remembers cutting hay for Kary, west of where Ted Sammons lives now and also helping to haul rocks for Kary's barn.

Henry and his brother Ed recalled the first stores that were located close to Norris, S. D. The first one was started by Scott Charging Alone. He was from White River but his wife was from Black Pipe. It was in about 1895 or 1896. The store was located in the Badlands where Ben Looking White had his allotment. Emery Amiotte lives there now. They sold tobacco, flour, sugar and other staple foods. No meat was sold, everybody raised his own. They hauled their groceries from Valentine, Nebr., with a four horse team and wagon.

Next, Alexander Big Crow ran a store about one and one-half miles north of Norris, S. D. Mrs. Big Crow was an aunt of Ed and Henry Eagle Bear, so the boys often stayed there. They described these stores as being of logs and were built about the size of the "By The Way" Store, that is in Todd County now—except they didn't have any filling station out in front, they just had some good hitching posts. The Big Crow Store was started in about 1900.

Another store was built on the Government Reserve just north of the present town of Norris, S. D., by Reuben Quick Bear. He was a graduate of the Carlisle School in Pennsylvania. His children still live around Norris and White River. He operated this store for five years. Henry Eagle Bear was quite young but he often hauled groceries for the Quick Bear Store with a four horse team and wagon.

Henry Eagle Bear was baptized when he was six years old by the Episcopal minister, A. B. Clark, for whom a Memorial Meeting House has recently been erected at Rosebud, S. D. His father, Henry Eagle Bear, Sr., was a soldier stationed at Fort Niobrara near Valentine, Nebr. When Henry was about four years old his folks lived down there for about three years while his father was in the service.

According to the treaty drawn up between the Government and the Sioux Indians when they were put on the Rosebud Reservation, the Government was to build day schools for their children. So about 1890 the following schools were built in Mellette County: Lower Cut Meat, Ring Thunder, Black Pipe, Corn Creek, Upper Pine Creek, Lower Pine Creek, Little White, Little Crow, Whirlwind Soldier, White Thunder and Butte Creek Day School.

Houses were to be built for the Indian Chiefs, too; Henry recalls eight of them and thinks they were also built about 1890. The one at Corn Creek was built for Chief Eagle Hawk. These houses were made of cedar logs, and were about 16 foot square. They had one large room, a good floor, shingled roof, good windows and doors. All were built on about the same pattern.

A second one was farther south of Corn Creek, about four miles, on the west side of Black Pipe Creek, about one mile south of the present Burrell Phipps house. It was for Chief Eagle Horse. The third one was two miles south of that, on the east side of Black Pipe Creek right at the junction of highway 40. It was built for Chief Search The Enemy. The fourth was just below the ridge, three and a half miles northwest of Norris and was built for Chief Little Chief. The fifth, was on the Government Reserve land just northeast of Norris, S. D. It was used for the farmer-interpreter, or Boss Farmer as he was later called. It was also used by Indian Police. In about 1895, it was torn down, and remodeled and again used by the Police.

The fifth was four miles from Norris built for Chief Bull Walks Behind. The sixth was built close to Gus Kaufman's place, a little south of Gus's house. It was for Chief Quick Bear, the oldest of the chiefs, and the father of Reuben Quick Bear. The seventh was for Chief Daniel Poor Thunder. It was two miles southeast of Reece Bligh's present home, on the east side of the creek. This chief was buried on his allotment. The eighth was about one and one-half miles south of Kary's. It was for Chief Grey Eagle Tail, who was Paul Eagle Tail's father. All of these houses were built on the chiefs' own land allotments.

During the blizzard of 1951, the Henry Eagle family almost perished near the Kary store. Henry was sick, so their son, his wife and two small children started to take him and his wife to the Doctor at Rosebud, S. D. The storm was so bad by the time they got a half mile south of the Kary corner they couldn't see the road. Next their car stalled and they had no idea what to do; then they heard someone calling and Bud Kary, grandson of Kary's, came riding one horse and leading another. They put the mother and children on the horses and the rest of them followed back to the corner where Wm. Kary, Sr., was waiting with his truck. He took them all to Kary's, about one-half mile, and they stayed there until the roads were cleared.

Another thing that Henry Bear Eagle remembers about the old days was that the treaty had provided that the Indians should receive free rations and beef should be issued to them each month. The Reservation was divided into districts. Mellette County had Black Pipe, White River, and Wood (Butte Creek) Issue Stations. A slaughter house was erected in each district usually along a creek or river. Each month, the Government issued cattle at each district according to the Indian population. About ten steers was the quota for the Black Pipe District. The Boss Farmer selected some men to help butcher at the slaughter house. The beef was killed outside, then pulled up with pulleys on a track. It was handled much the same as at any slaughter house. Then the meat was cut up, and was divided and distributed according to the size of the family. The hide was put into the hide house and dried, later these hides would be loaded on a wagon and hauled to Rosebud from where they were sold to hide buyers. A check was sent back to the superintendent for the hides and this money was divided among all the people of the district. Later the slaughter house was moved from the Black Pipe Creek to the Government Reserve, about two and one-half miles from the original site. After the terms of the treaty expired, it was torn down.

* * *

Taken from the Parmelee News, in the "Todd County Tribune" (1961):

Henry Eagle Bear, age 77 years, passed away last Tuesday evening at his home in Black Pipe Community, after a short illness. Funeral services and burial were conducted by Catechist, Samuel Bear, at St. Paul's Episcopal Chapel and Cemetery, Saturday afternoon, at 2 p.m. His wife, Agnes, preceded him in death two years ago. He is survived by one son, Russell, two brothers, Ed and Charles; one sister, Lucy. Henry was a councilman from his district for four terms (8 years) and was held in high esteem by everyone who knew him, as a faithful and loyal friend. Our sincere sympathy goes out to his son, Russell, and family, also other relatives.

Obstacles along the pathway to success are like boulders in a road. We must either climb over them or we will fall over them. — W. R.

# The Egleston Story

**By Winifred Egleston Reutter**

My parents were Mellette County homesteaders. They came here from Iowa and spent the remainder of their lives on their homestead located in Cody Township.

Dad registered in Gregory, S. D., in October 1911 but failed to draw a number. However, his brother did and filed in Mellette County in the "Map Room" at White River in April 1912. While there he heard of a soldier who had drawn a land number but wanted to sell out. He notified Dad who came to South Dakota and bought this relinquishment. A "relinquishment" meant that the soldier relinquished all his rights to homestead on this piece of land. Quite a few of the people sold out this way.

**Dad registered at Gregory, S. D., October 1911**

Dad then filed on SW 30 42-27. His was homestead entry number 07672 which was registered at the land office at Chamberlain.

On June 13, 1913, my Mother, brother Wesley (born March 26, 1913), and myself, Winifred (nicknamed Cleo, born March 10, 1909), joined Dad on the homestead. Dad passed away there in 1927 and Mother in 1940. Wesley still owns and operates the Egleston homestead. The story of the Eglestons coming to Mellette County is told in our earlier book, "Mellette County Memories," so I will not repeat it here.

In those days kids had no TV's to watch so we picked up cobs and always had lots of chores to do. I also spent many days herding cattle. Those were busy but happy days for all of the homesteaders and their children.

**Mellette County Homesteaders filed in the "Map Room," April 1912. Later, this became the Mellette County courthouse.**

**Egleston Homestead, hay, barn and stock, SW 30 42-27 (1913)**

I've always liked to read, but papers or magazines were luxury items. One of our neighbors, Buffingtons, had the good fortune to have a Mother back in Iowa who shipped them a barrel of apples and other things every fall. She included the year's collection of the "Comfort" magazine and other papers including the "Funnies." Buffingtons read these papers then generously passed them on to us. I can still remember how thrilled we would be when they would come down for a Sunday dinner and visit, bringing that bundle of precious reading material to us. We then passed it on to other neighbors after it was well read. Also the few who were fortunate enough to own books, loaned them around the country to be read and reread. I well remember that every winter, about as soon as the first snow fell, I would go over to Sinnings to again borrow their book, "The Adventures of a Brownie." Then Mother would read it page by page in the winter evenings while we sat around the stove watching the flames flickering behind the isinglass panes in the heater door. We were all warm and cozy and the winds howling outside held no fear for us. We didn't even know that we were living through a time of terrible hardships—we were just alive and glad of it.

These are some of my happy childhood memories. About the only thing that I didn't like in those days was the smell of home-made soap cooking on the back of the old Kalamazoo kitchen range. I always managed to find plenty to do out doors until each batch of soap was made. It was a lot different when the wild plums or chokecherries were boiling on the stove or fresh bread was baking in the oven.

All the homesteaders that made a go of it had to work and work hard. There was an old story that was often told about the lazy man and the load of corn. My Grandad said they told it in the days of timber claims when he was a boy and it was still going around when Mellette County was opened for homesteaders.

It seems there was this lazy character who would not work to support his family. The neighbors, intending to scare him into working, threatened to take him and bury him if he didn't go to work. They hitched up a team, loaded him in the wagon box along with their spades and shovels then drove off toward the burying ground. Enroute they passed another homesteader who hadn't been told of their plan. Naturally, he asked them where they were going and they told what they had

**Dad, at right, with posthole digger, and Gus Gunner, like other homesteaders fenced in the open prairie (Dec. 14, 1913).**

decided to do. This homesteader said, "Oh, don't do that. I'll give him a load of corn so he can make cornmeal and have cornbread and mush and milk for his family."

Evidently the shiftless fellow had been listening, because he raised up from where he was laying on the bottom of the wagon box and said, "Is the corn shelled?"

"No, it's ear corn in my crib," replied the homesteader. The lazy fellow settled down again, saying with a sigh, "Drive on, boys!"

No one ever told me what happened to the worthless fellow but I'm sure he wasn't a homesteader in Mellette County. They were all able to work hard, shell and grind their corn and eat their corn bread or mush and milk with good healthy appetites!

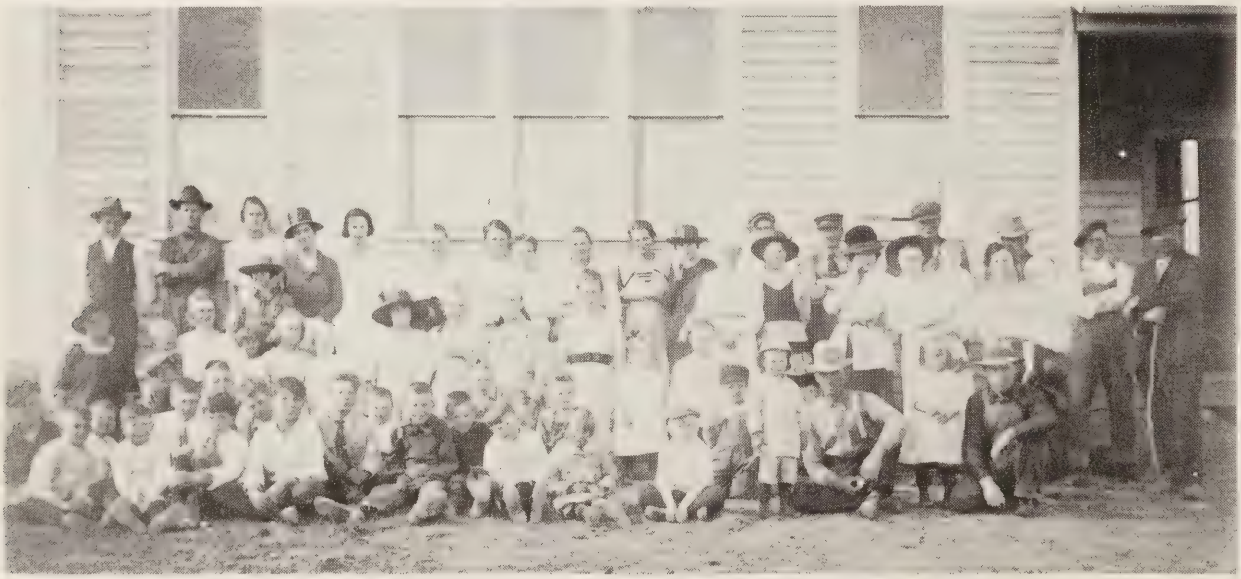
* * *

### A TRIBUTE TO MY PARENTS — MELLETTE COUNTY PIONEERS

They came out west, where the lonely coyote run,
To build a home for themselves, a daughter and a baby son.
Dad brought his team and a walking, breaking plow,
His carpenter tools, some speckled hens, and a gentle Roany cow.
Mother brought her trunk, full of quilts and calico clothes,
Her butter bowl, a crockery churn and slips from a yellow rose.
Blizzards and drouth, adventures like the rest . . .
Of good times and bad times . . . shared with settlers of the west.
Dakota homesteaders plowed and planted, now are gone . . .
Their heritage of courage became ours to carry on!

—D. T. C., Winifred Reutter, White River
(Dakota Territory Contest,
received honorable mention)

Reprinted from Centennial Issue
of "Pasque Petals," March 1961



CODY COMMUNITY AT THE SCHOOL PICNIC, MAY 1922

**Left to right, back row:** Henry Filbrandt, Frank Fitch, Sophia Filbrandt, Mrs. Guy Hutchinson, Geraldine Hutchinson, Mrs. Gus Gunner, **my mother—Mrs. Fred Egleston,** Mrs. Frank Tisdell, Mrs. Fred Leusman, Mrs. Harry Atwood, Mrs. Lefler, Mrs. John Smith, Mrs. Charles Mueller, Gus Gunner behind her, Frank Barcal, Mrs. J. A. Bailey, Mrs. Frank Barcal holding her daughter, Emily. **Behind them, my dad, Fred Egleston.** Mrs. John Sykora holding her daughter, Emily, Charley Mueller behind them, Frank Tisdell and Fred Leusman. **Second row, left to right:** Mrs. Poore, Mrs. Frank Fitch holding Orlo, Mildred Hutchinson in plaid dress and her sister, Genevieve, behind them. Vyvenne and Grace Tisdell, Irene Hutchinson with large hat, Christine Gunner, **myself with plaid dress and pigtails, (Cleo) Winifred Egleston.** In front of me are the Leusman twins—Elsie and Angeline, Sophia Smith, Ruth Mueller, Anna Barcal. **Front row:** Paul Mueller, Woodrow Atwood, Junior Poore, Rudolph Sykora, Frank Barcal, Fred Mueller, in front with hands clasped **on his knees, my brother, Wesley Egleston, who furnished this picture,** Ralph Simkins, Tom and Pat Bailey, Waldo, Milton and Delbert Mueller, Bill Sykora, Mabel Gunner, Orville Poore, Raymond, Eldred and Mr. Harry Atwood, Elsie and Mr. John Sykora.

# The R. P. England Ranch

**By Mrs. Rose England**

A request to write a story of the early pioneer days of South Dakota brings a feeling of humbleness to me. We pause at this time to consider the American heritage of the pioneer spirit and to pay tribute to those who lived here in the past. We cannot help but realize what an important heritage and duty they have left for those of us who are trying to follow in their footsteps.

I have heard so much of the early pioneer days from the old time cattlemen. All of the hard times, drouths and blizzards that have taken place. It would almost make a book by itself and I am especially grateful for the effort which is being made to preserve some record of their deeds and way of life in the early years in Mellette County.

The building up of the R. P. England ranch was no tailor-made pattern. It sort of grew larger, a step at a time.

A little one room shack was the home of the first people on the ranch. From a small ranch of about 480 acres it has grown over the years to it's present size of 168,978 acres. The first 480 was bought from an individual owner. A great deal of the rest of the acreage was bought from time to time from Indians through the Rosebud Agency. Each quarter purchased was replaced by land somewhere else so the Indians kept title to some land. Much of the land purchased was grouped in a unit and had to be replaced by land elsewhere. (Usually a "unit" is a number of adjoining quarters that form a large tract of land which is rented or sold in one block. W. R.)

England Ranch House (taken years ago)

A few of Englands' huge herds

Mellette County, in the homesteading days, had a homesteader on nearly every quarter of land open to homesteaders, but later on, ranchers began to buy up several quarters to make up larger ranches. The England ranch has developed over the years into one of the largest ranches in Mellette County.

One thing about the ranch cattle out here is that they can rustle feed for themselves a lot of the time if the grazing is good. Cattle are not put in the barn here like they are back East. They can be found grazing on the native grass in all but the worst stormy seasons.

Over the years a more systematic ranching method was followed and more intensive plans for higher production were put into use. Fine breeds, like the Hereford and Aberdeen Angus supplanted the uneconomic longhorns. These are the favorites on the England ranch. They were raised and sold throughout the past years for the purpose of building up the England ranch as it now stands.

(Mr. England passed away and his sons now operate this large Mellette County ranch. Mrs. Rose England, who contributed this story lives in White River now. W. R.)

# Homesteading North of White River

**By Jessie Barton Erickson**

We homesteaded in April 1912, coming to Mellette County from Ainsworth, Nebr. Lew Barton, my husband, myself and our two little boys came in a covered wagon. We led a milk cow behind the wagon and we were five days on the road. Now with the new cars and good roads they can make it in four or five hours.

Our homestead was six miles north of White River. Our neighbors were Hud Rhoades, John Wacek and wife, Tom Strange and wife and a preacher named Barton and his wife. Then there were twin brothers, Bill and Walt Knudson. Bill had sleeping sickness that first summer and was never completely well afterwards. Mr. Keneston was the locator.

In White River, at that time, one hotel was run by Jones and Mrs. Tomsik ran the other. Charley Hight was in one bank and Bob Jones in the other one. John Hight had a general store.

Our house on the homestead was just a shack about 14x20. We held neighborhood dances and everybody thought they had a very good time. Our neighbors were people from nearly every state, homesteading on their claims. Besides the young married couples there were bachelors, old maids and young teachers living around us.

Rev. Van Valkenburgh was the first minister and Dr. Pugh was the first doctor. Roy Raffensperger was a neighbor, single at that time, then married Roxy later. Margaret Bramer was our first school teacher. She boarded with me and later married Otto Hanson. She was sure a swell girl. She and her sister Ella both lived out there; they homesteaded down on that little creek north of us. D. L. McLane was a well-to-do rancher, he

**Left to right: Mr. and Mrs. Lew Barton, Mrs. and Mr. Tom Strange, Preacher Barton and wife, Mrs. and Mr. Wacek. Gerald, Max Barton and their dog, behind on the sod.** (Taken Dec. 24, 1912.)

had married an Indian woman; they had several good looking girls. Gladys, one of the girls, was the belle of White River. Mrs. D. L. was a good woman and was a friend of both the Indians and whites. After she died, D. L. married again.

We were always scared of the Indians at first. I well remember our first Fourth of July. A lot of the white folks were camped in tents at White River to have a celebration. On the morning of the Fourth, the Sioux Indians, about a hundred strong, came into town. It was just daylight and they were riding horses and all were wearing war paint and Indian clothes. They began to holler and yell. Everybody ran out of their tents in their night clothes. Most of us had coats on over our nightgowns and we went running down main street. One old Indian chased me; he had on one of those long feathered head-dresses and plenty of war paint and scared me nearly to death. Then he laughed and laughed and said: "White woman, big coward!"

Water was a problem for the homesteaders. Our well water was so hard we had to haul all drinking and wash water from the Little White River in barrels in the back of our wagons. Sometimes we took our washing to the river, heating our wash water in tubs set on rocks. Often we melted snow in the winter. We used to bathe the boys on Saturday night in a tub of water and we would bathe in the same water and then I would wash out our underclothes also in the same water. Water was that scarce! Now when I tell my grand-kids about it, I say, "I think we boiled potatoes in it the next day"—of course we didn't; more likely I scrubbed the floor with it.

Those were the good old days that you younger folks hear about!

I would love to come home for the Mellette County fiftieth anniversary celebration and will if it is possible. We lived in Mellette County 21 years so it seems like home to me.

**A School Picnic**

# First Sheriff of Mellette County

**By Myrtle Estes**

Stephen Estes, Jr., was the first sheriff elected in Mellette County at the first general election held on May 25, 1911.

Stephen Estes, Jr., and Edward Estes were sons of a prominent government agent who held offices in both Pine Ridge and Rosebud Reservations. Stephen F. Estes, Sr., came to Thatcher, Nebr., in 1879. After finishing his government service in South Dakota, he moved to a ranch on the White River near what was later the Westover Post Office site; this Post Office is now discontinued.

Their log house was built in 1880, the first house in that part of the country. There, in 1881, Edward Estes was born and in 1884, Stephen, Jr., made his appearance.

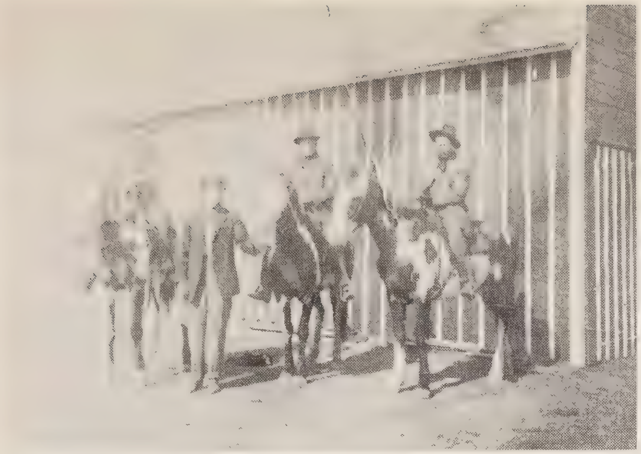
The family lived here until 1888 and when they moved away, the house was used as a store and post office for a few years.

The boys worked on their father's ranch until Stephen Estes, Sr., passed away in 1910.

Edward and Stephen, Jr., were excellent cowboys; both rode in the 1902 Round-up. They also worked on the Government fence when the Rosebud and Pine Ridge Reservations were fenced. This fence had five wires with posts a rod apart. It went along the ridge south of the Big White River until it came to the boundary of the Pine Ridge Reservation. The fence between the two reservations (Rosebud on the east side and Pine Ridge on the west) started at the Nebraska line and ran north along the boundary between the two, until it joined the east-west line at a point south of Belvidere at the mouth of Black Pipe Creek. This fence was built through a lot of rough country and not well maintained, consequently stock soon found their way through in many places. So, they required line riders to keep the stock where they belonged. The Estes brothers were some of the riders employed along this Government fence.

Little remains of that Government fence today. Most of it was sold to the homesteaders and ranchers at so much per mile. A few solitary posts may still be seen on the Utterback Ranch today.

During the famous Round-up of 1902, Edward was one of the top ropers and Stephen, Jr., kept tally for the Government by knots in a long rope. He made one knot for every one hundred head of cattle tallied through a counting chute or gate.



**Livery barn owned by Steve Estes. Left to right: Ned Bear Heels, Steve Estes, Silas Standing Hawk, Alex Turning Hawk. Taken in White River about 1912. (Yellow Robe picture)**

These two Estes brothers, Edward and Stephen, married sisters, Susan and Maude Utterback, daughters of the late J. E. Utterback.

Steve was the first sheriff of Mellette County, serving two terms. He had many perplexing problems to settle in this new country. He then moved to his ranch on the Big White River south of Belvidere where he lived until he retired. He moved to Rapid City in 1951, where he passed away in September 1958 and is buried there.

Edward lived on his ranch north of White River until his family was grown. He was living with a son in Huron, S. D., when he passed away in 1934.

A diary written by the grandmother of Edward and Stephen tells of her life in 1861. It mentions the Civil War and President Lincoln's death. She had two sons in the Army. Her husand, Captain Estes, piloted steamboats up and down the Mississippi River. On April 15, 1865, she wrote in her diary; "Received news of President's death; he was shot on the evening of the 14th at Booth's Theater and died on the morning of the 15th. That same evening Secretary Seward was badly injured by some assassins who attempted to cut his throat."

On the sixteenth she wrote: "Sunday, all the churches and loyal houses are draped in black and there is general mourning (except among the traitors) for this, our great national loss."

So, one hundred years ago, and also fifty years ago, the Estes family was taking part in the history making events of our country.

# A Homesteader's Balky Horse

**By John Falk**

It was in the spring of 1912 when I wended my way toward the prairies of South Dakota. I arrived in Winner by train and then went on to White River on one of those large wheeled International three-seated lumber wagons. We reached our destination through dirt and dust spending most of the day on the trail without meeting a friend or foe.

Arriving at White River I met a Swede and an Irishman, the firm of Sjoblom and Nolan at the land office quarters. Being a full-blooded Swede myself and a good friend of the Irish it did not take us long to get acquainted and get to work. First we had to locate a quarter which I could later call a homestead. This taken care of, I landed in the busy Jones Hotel which I made my headquarters until the day my bachelor quarters were nailed together out where the coyotes, wolves and rattlesnakes also seemed to have their habitations.

The construction of the small two-room dwelling became somewhat of a problem for a young kid, not being a carpenter. I had purchased what I considered a fine team of black horses and a spring buggy, also an old lumber wagon. All this, I calculated, would save me considerable time and expense in both the hauling of material and other necessary work around this new home of mine.

Well, I drove over to the lumber yard and made a deal, loaded on all the lumber that I thought the old wagon chassis would stand, and it was no small load. I had to cross the Little White River west of town, but everything went fine along the winding trail on a somewhat level grade until I reached a bend in the road.

**Jno. A. Falk Ranch, White River**

There was a rather steep quarter-mile hill and I was about half-way up when I discovered that my bargain black team was not such a bargain after all. You have heard of balky mules, well, I had a balky horse. This horse was not just part balky but a complete standstill. I petted, I talked nice, I coaxed, I had tears rolling down my sweat covered cheeks, (I did not swear) but of no avail. I had heard that a balky mule could be moved by building a fire under him but this I did not dare risk, as this dumb critter of mine would probably move up six feet to let my wagonload of lumber do the burning.

I did the only thing I could do, unload the lumber and carry it up the hill. When this was done, that wonderful animal seemed very willing to follow along and eventually team, wagon and lumber were all on top of the hill. I proceeded to reload and all went according to plan until we reached the trail back to town. We followed it a short distance along the Little White River. My balky friend had caused so much delay it was now close to midnight and dark as pitch. Not being familiar with the crossing and unable to see in the dark I was forced to get down on hands and knees, in order to locate the spot to cross. In the meantime, since we were close to an Indian village, a pack of dogs was howling and making an effort to get close enough to chew my legs. Finally we reached the other side and crossed the ditch, breaking the wagon tongue. That was enough, I unhitched my bargain team and led them up town to the livery barn. I crawled into bed way after midnight. It had been a full day!

I had many interesting experiences—got lost in the hills, slept out nights, dug out young coyotes. I tied them to a cord and slipped them through the door for some young school teacher to play with. Not bad company if you are lonesome.

**No Super Highway in 1912**

My Indian neighbors were Castaway and Shoot At Him. They seemed to enjoy my coffee as without fail every afternoon I would have company.

Having established my residence it became necessary to look for employment. I worked with Sjoblom and Nolan, surveying and running lines. I sawed ice on the river in the winter, developing an appetite the like of which I never had before or since. I did considerable precinct assessing which was done on horseback. I clerked in Roy Hodges' hardware store and was later employed by the Mellette County Bank, holding the office of assistant cashier until we left Mellette County in 1916.

By the way, the balky horse took my girl and me around in my fancy cane-seated single buggy!

## Happy Hollow History

### By Mrs. John Falk

My maiden name was Anna May Bramer. While my sister, Margaret (Mrs. Otto Hanson), was homesteading near Cottonwood Creek, I came up from Harlan, Iowa, to stay with her.

We attended the first Teacher's Normal Institute held in Mellette County. Professor Green was in charge. Sister Margaret taught the Cottonwood School. I taught the first school in the Glatfelter District, later called Happy Hollow, with the attendance of thirteen pupils, namely Winifred and Bud Turner, Naomi and Clark Gallagher, Doyle Graham, Vyvene Tisdell, two Houseman girls and two Sorensen girls; the others I have forgotten.

**Anna Bramer Falk and Pupils**

Our school house was a homestead shack, 12 x 14. A small stove was in one corner, an orange crate holding the water pail and dipper in the other. We burned wood and coal. Some of the fathers made crude desks and benches for all the pupils, also a desk and a chair for the teacher. I bought a pony and rode three miles, morning and night, to the Archie Maxwell ranch for the first three months. After the weather conditions became bad, I stayed at the Art Turner home 1½ miles away. Winifred and Bud Turner walked with me to school. Sometimes we dismissed school at noon due to severe snowstorms and blizzards. The parents would then come for the children. The Sorensen girls rode a white horse to school. One day the storm was so bad we could not see the path, so gave the horse its reins and he brought the girls and me safely home.

In December 1913 John A. Falk and I were married. We rented a homesteaders shack 1½ miles from the school; this was for the rest of the term. John was employed in the Mellette County Bank in White River. He rode his pony to work. Sometimes I walked to school and had to walk over open prairie land to reach my school. There were very few fences. One morning I was surrounded by a herd of long horned range cattle. I finally realized they were more curious than angry, so I shook and rattled my tin dinner pail, and screamed! They let me through the herd and I ran to the closest fence, rolled under the wire and was soon on my way again. Another morning a cow with a new-born calf meant to do away with me but I beat her to the fence and hid behind a small butte till she went away, bellowing.

If I remember correctly, I taught the six grades for the sum of $45.00 per month for that year.

On Fridays, before we were married, I went to stay with my sister, Margaret. On Saturday, Otto Hanson, with his mules, took us to town in a spring wagon, fording the Little White River in order to reach the town.

Sam Texter lived near us. He dug nine wells before he got water fit to drink. Most of the water contained alkali. Mr. Texter was saving the hides of rattlesnakes to cover a suit case. One day, riding around on my pony, I saw a large rattler disappearing into his hole. I jumped off the pony, grabbed him by the tail and jerked him out of the hole, then called Sam to come and kill him. He gave me a good lecture for doing such a foolish stunt; however, I knew or had heard a rattler will not strike unless he is coiled (they can't strike but can still bite!).

We lived in White River four years. Our oldest daughter, Helen Evangeline, was born there. Dr. Pugh was the doctor.

# The Fox Story

**By Mrs. Thomas Fox**

I am sitting here at my desk, this beautiful rainy morning and really enjoying it. We have needed this moisture here this spring. Only we, who have lived here so many years know how dry it can get, and how terrible the drouth and dust storms are, so we are thankful for this rain.

As I sit here and look back over the first years we were here, I know that God has been good to us in many ways.

I live across the county line that runs between Mellette and Todd Counties. Our home is on the Todd County side but much of our land is on the Mellette County side so we feel that we belong to both counties.

My husband came to South Dakota in 1917 and I came in 1918. He was called to the army in the summer of 1918. Later, we moved to our home here near the county line.

Mrs. Fox, front center, at home with her children. Left to right (back): Tommie Joe, Kathryn Rose and Mickey; (front) Twila Lou, Mrs. Fox and Dixie Jean.

We have seen so many changes, good years and bad years. Lately, we have had good grain crops and good grazing. I can see the herds of cattle and sheep feeding on the hills and it makes me glad that I came here.

In the early years, we made our own entertainment (no TV's), so we had neighborhood dinners, oyster suppers and card parties.

Mrs. Kate Fox, wearing her centennial dress. She won third place at Mission's centennial celebration (Winifred Reutter picture).

One time, I remember so well. We neighbors gathered at the Hal Durrin home for an oyster supper. Later the men played cards, the ladies visited and the children played games. When it came time to go home, we each left in our various vehicles. Ours was a Model T truck. It stalled on the way home and nothing would start it. So we decided we would walk home, thinking that we could at least keep warm. Tom took the baby (now Mrs. Twila Abourezk) and I took the two older children, Mick and Kathryn Rose (now Mrs. Thomas) and we walked about one and a half miles. The kiddies were hurrying along and not complaining about the cold. My feet got cold and seemed to feel worse, the farther we came. By the time we arrived at home they were frozen. I spent the rest of the night thawing them out. I always think of that night when we go to the pasture as we travel on that same trail that was our only road then. Now we travel good roads instead of trails and I can see much improvement in our country. I belong to the Mellette County Cowbelles, the Auxiliary of the Stockgrowers organization.

### MOTHER'S POETRY

I thought and wrote and composed,
Until my masterpiece was complete.
Proudly I showed it to the folks —
"Yep," they said, "When do we eat?"
—Winifred Reutter, 1954

# Memoranda of a Homesteader

**By Paris N. Fridy**

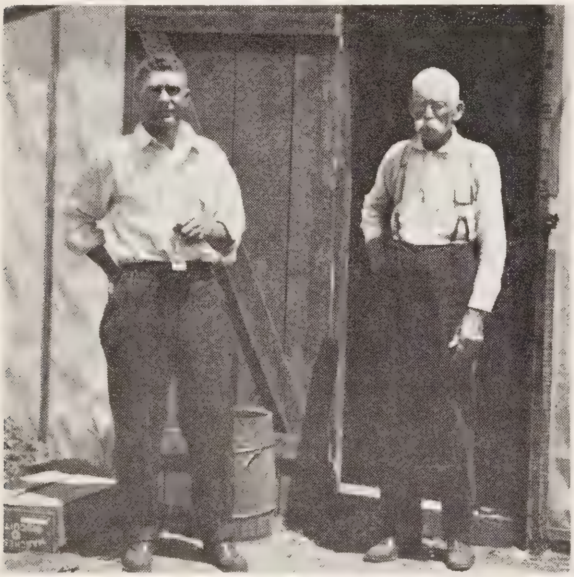
While working in the Engineering Department of the Union Pacific Railroad Co. in Omaha, Nebr., in 1911, I read of the great U.S. Land Lottery of Homestead Land on the Rosebud Indian Reservation in Mellette County, S. D. My brother, Simon Fridy, and I went to South Dakota in October 1911 to register.

In due time I learned that I was number 380 out of some 40,000 registrants for a chance at some 4,000 claims to be given out by the U.S. Government.

In March of 1912 I went to White River to be ready to file for a quarter section of land. When my number was called, about 100 had dropped out and I had 280th choice out of 4,000 claims.

I chose a quarter section that was NW 24 41-29, located four miles south of White River about ½ mile east of Rosebud road to Mission, S. D.

My quarter section at the time I filed was bounded on the south by Richard Bordeaux, on the west by Broken Leg, on the north by Bull Chief and on the east by Wm. MacDonald, another homesteader. He had filed before I did but I started my residence before Bill did.



Paris N. Fridy and John F. Lynch, Carpenters

When I came to White River I looked around for a job and I was referred to Tom Cameron, contractor, who was building various buildings in White River. I bought a hammer and a saw, so became a hammer and saw carpenter! I worked with Tom Cameron for about two years. I got to know Mr. John Lynch, who was a first grade carpenter and from him I learned much about the trade.

After I filed on my claim I immediately built a shack and established residence. I proved up on my claim in fourteen months and after paying the nominal Government fee, received a deed to my quarter section of land. I proved up on my land by sleeping at the shack one night a week (generally Saturday), having someone break the required number of acres of prairie ground as required by the Government law to establish my claim.

While homesteading I kept working at the carpenter trade in White River.

After Tom Cameron left White River, John Lynch and I bid on Government Indian houses and won contracts to build five Indian houses and one barn.

As John F. Lynch and Paris N. Fridy, contractors, we set up our office and residence in White River in a shack located on the Pickards lot. He was the man who had the mail route between White River and Murdo, S. D.

My brother, Simon, was working for the Towle Engineering Co. in Omaha, Nebr., and did not come to White River until the summer of 1912. He watched the delinquent residence claims and filed what was known as squatters rights on a quarter section about three miles southeast of where my claim was located. He built a shack and fulfilled all claim rights and proved up on it in fourteen months.

Simon had an opportunity to sell his quarter section shortly after acquiring a deed and used my quarter as a home and expanded across the Little White River to the west.

Simon and I came east in October of 1915 to visit our parents, and our mother died November 7, 1915. After her death I remained in the east while Simon returned to White River and became a permanent resident. He married Miss Helen Minnick of Maytown, Pa.

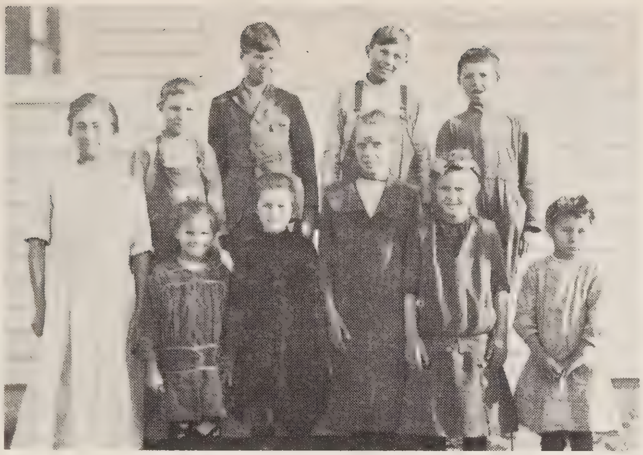
I acquired a job in the Valuation Department of The Central Railroad Co. of New Jersey in New York, N. Y., in February 1916 and was married to Miss Minerva Stauffer of Elizabethtown, Penn., in November 1916.

Simon and Helen Fridy

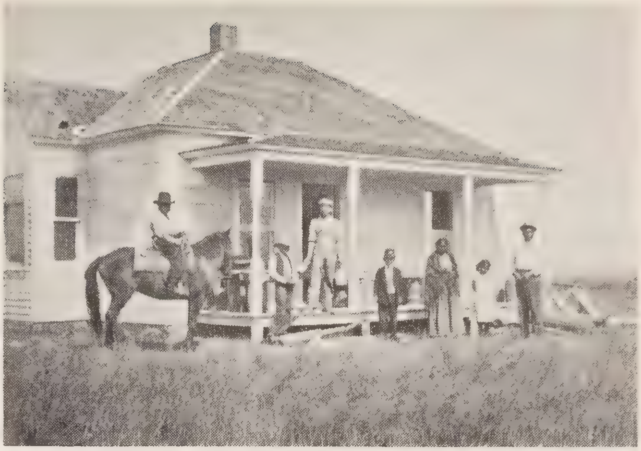
I worked in New York until September 1, 1926. Then I secured a job with the Pittsburgh and West Virginia Railway Co. at Pittsburgh, Penn., and remained with them for thirty years. I retired from the railroad business on December 31, 1956, and moved to our home town of Elizabethtown, Pa.

Since returning to 145 College Avenue, Elizabethtown, Pa., I secured a job as a draftsman in the reassessment office of the Lancaster County Commissioners at Lancaster, Pa., and have been working there since August 19, 1957.

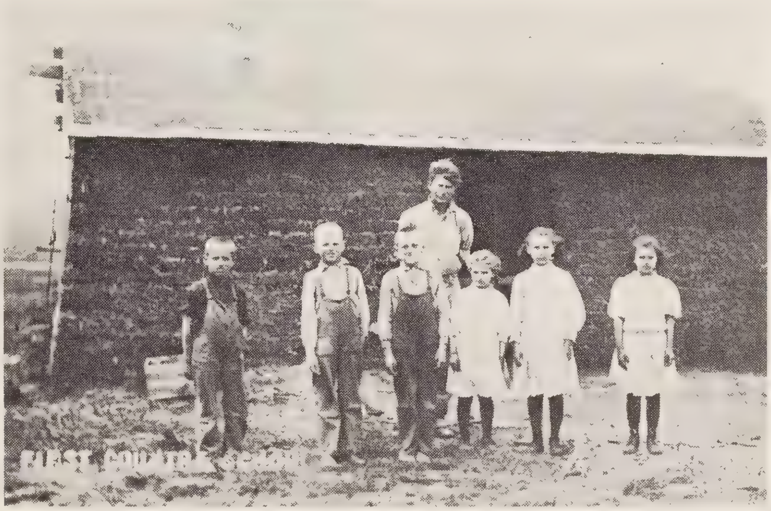
Mrs. Fridy and I are enjoying excellent health. Our immediate family consists of a daughter, Margaret, married and has two sons. Our son, Robert, married and has one son.



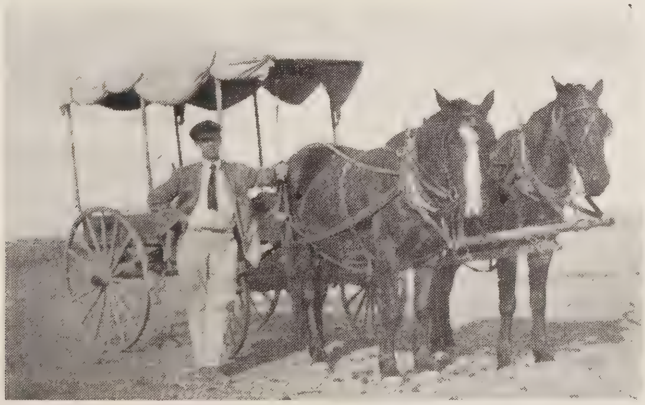
Mrs. Simon Fridy and Her Pupils



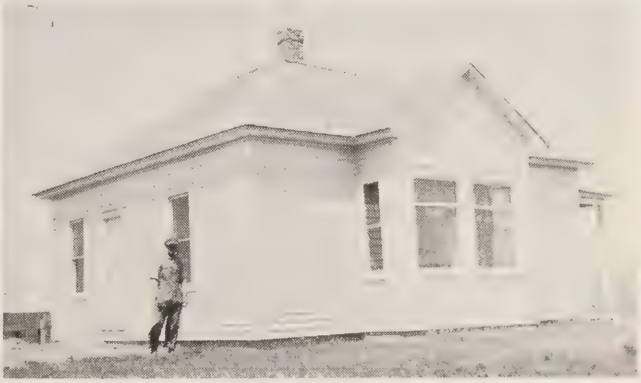
House that Paris Fridy and Lynch built for Indian Policeman, Andrew Night Pipe.



One of the first country schools in Mellette County. Picture sent by Al Wolford. Paris Fridy says it is Iles Huey teaching the Texsam School.



Sime Fridy and his "Surrey"



House built for Tom Yellow Fox, June 1915, by Paris Fridy and Lynch.

# Homestead Days in Pure Water District

**By Mrs. Sam Funk**

My late husband, Sam Funk (who passed away in 1952), and I came from Virginia to the Black Hills in 1902.

In 1908 my family of three and I went by train to Dallas, S. D., while my husband shipped our horses to Presho and trailed them from there to Dallas. He traveled over burnt ground the first day, as a prairie fire had passed over this area a few days earlier. At the end of this first day Sam found that his face was black as coal from smoke and dust. We spent four years near Dallas and Colome.

In the fall of 1911, Sam, accompanied by The Jackson Brothers, Locators, filed on eighty acres of land in the Pure Water District (W½ SE 10 40-28).

On this land were a priceless spring and water holes where an Indian cattle round-up was held. John Yellow Wolf, an expert roper, was foreman of this round-up. When Yellow Wolf had a lariat in his hand, the critter was the same as caught.

During the winter we made arrangements to leave Colome for our homestead. In April we left in a four-horse covered wagon and trailer with our children: Ada, Glea, Hallie, and Ernest. We took our household goods, a milk cow, a few chickens, and our saddle horse, Whitey. Hindered by cold, rainy weather and a sick baby, the entire trip of sixty-five miles took us about eight days. During the course of our trip we spent three days at the I. T. Stone Hotel in Carter and camped in a school house near Gate City. On April 15, 1912 we arrived at our claim, located seven miles southwest of Wood as the crow flies.

**Funks on homestead. Back row (left to right): Hallie, Mrs. Sam and Sam. Front row: Glea, Ada and Ernest.**

That evening we set up our tent and prepared supper on an open camp fire.

Early the next morning, much to our astonishment, our native neighbors, the Indians, came to see us. As these Indians began talking their own language and making motions, our children scampered to the covered wagon. The names of these friendly neighbors were: Brave Bear, Winters, and George Arm. As time went on we became used to the Indians and many of them stopped to visit us. The following names will be familiar to many old timers: John Bonser, George Schmidt, Kelly Leighton, George Leighton, George Thin Elk, Pete Thin Elk, George White Wash, and John Strike.

We lived in this tent for a few more days, and again it started to rain with a cold wind blowing. Due to this disagreeable weather, our kind neighbors, Mr. and Mrs. James Rennick, invited us to move in with them. The Rennicks lived about one-half mile from us in an old Indian Day School. We lived in two rooms of this six-room building. Mr. and Mrs. Rennick lived in three rooms, and Mrs. Rennick taught school in one room. Hallie and Ernest finished their school term there. While we were living there Sam freighted the lumber for our claim shack from Valentine, Nebr., by team and wagon. In a few days Neal Emmerick and Sam had our shack almost completed. All that was lacking was the rubberoid on the roof, so we moved in and OH! what a busy day. That night it started to rain and we spent several hours mopping up water. As a result of this rain, the next day was spent drying our bedding and clothing.

**Teacher Simon Fridy and pupils, 1913** (left to right): Ernest Funk, Roy Mitchell, Jimmy Winters, Rodman Drummond, Hallie Funk, Helen Drummond, Irene Hall.

We were young and happy in this new land and full of bubbling optimism of days to come. Nevertheless, many hardships were encountered on the homestead. For a long time our drinking water, which came from a spring, was hauled in a barrel on a stoneboat. Finally, Fred Lewis dug a well for us with a horse-propelled drilling rig. We struck plenty of good soft water.

Much time was spent gathering eggs in the grass as we had no chicken house for the chickens to lay in. Without refrigeration, we had no cold drinks and only a very little fresh meat during the summer. Occasionally, however, we would have a prairie chicken or a cottontail in the summer months. During the other three seasons our chief source of meat was rabbits, wild fowl, pigs, beef, and our own chickens.

To supplement our income I sold many pounds of butter to J. B. Brown's store in Wood and T. B. Holland's store at Berkley. In order to make good butter I would hang a pail of cream in the well overnight and churn it early the next morning. Twice a week I would bake bread, which was quite a procedure compared to modern day methods. The night before I intended to bake bread, I would set the sponge, made with flour, salt, sugar, water and yeast cakes, in a warm place. Later I used what was called everlasting yeast. Everlasting yeast was merely a cup full of sponge kept in a fruit jar. In hot weather if this yeast became too sour to use, we would travel several miles to our neighbors, Durrins, to borrow some fresh yeast starter.

In the summertime the children and I would travel miles with the team and buggy to pick wild plums, chokecherries, grapes, and buffalo berries in order to make jelly, jam, and preserves for our winter's use. Then we spent a painful week getting rid of chiggers. We always had a good garden and I canned many jars of vegetables for the winter months. Every year we also made a barrel of sauerkraut, also pickled beans. In the fall Sam would freight out staple articles such as coffee, sugar, flour, salt, etc.

Our chief fuels were coal, dead wood, and brush. For lighting purposes kerosene lamps, lanterns and candles were used. The machinery in the homestead days was limited and crude. Our farming implements consisted of a walking plow, a disc, a cultivator and a harrow. The tools for repairing machinery were a hammer, axe, saw, monkey wrench, and a brace and bit. If you didn't have a bit of the right size, a heated rod was used as the substitute. The native timber was used for wagon tongues and wagon reaches, also for doubletrees and pitchfork handles.

Some of the hazards of homesteading were prairie fires, snakes, and blizzards. Sending small children to school was another worry, mostly due to the distance they had to travel. They either had to walk, ride horseback, or ride in a covered cart which Sam had made. In the fall the snakes were a menace, and in the wintertime you never knew when a blizzard might overtake the children before they got home. Most of the school houses were crudely built shacks with each pupil taking his own drinking water. Our teachers were good and understood the weather conditions, which was a relief to the parents. Some of the teachers we had that many remember are: Anna Durrin, Madge Durrin, Simon Fridy, Mrs. James Rennick, Florence Sterner, Elizabeth Merchen, and Vernon Branson.

The first summer on the homestead Sam killed dozens of rattlesnakes. We worried and cautioned the children every day when they were outside about these ugly, poisonous serpents. It was nothing unusual to see Ernest come to the door with a dead rattler on a stick. One evening when Ernest was carrying in some wood and piling it in the wood box behind the stove, I heard a hissing, spitting noise. When Hallie held the lamp closer to the wood box, we found a baby rattlesnake that Ernest had carried in with the wood. It didn't take long for me to do away with it. You were naturally on guard against any hissing noise wherever you went. So was the case with our good friend and neighbor, Mrs. Wes Drummond, and her two children, Helen and Rodman, who lived 1½ miles from us. While her husband, Wes, worked at Wood in the butcher shop she spent most of her time with us. When she walked over to our place, she would feel her way through the grass with a stick to avoid stepping on any rattlesnakes.

In the fall, prairie fires were the greatest threat. I remember well a terrible fire which started south of White River near the county line in the fall of 1916. All that night and the next day the wind blew at a gale force from the southwest pushing the fire rapidly over more and more ground. That morning we sent the children to school, but they were dismissed shortly afterwards as the fire was nearing the schoolhouse. Sam and the neighbors were out plowing fire guards, backfiring, getting cans of water and gunny sacks ready to help squelch the flames. Many men had fought the fire all night and were completely exhausted. As we had just butchered a beef, I fried steak and made coffee for twenty-seven men all day long. Most of our choice steak was gone, but we felt well rewarded as these men saved our winter's feed and our buildings.

**Friends and Neighbors at a Sunday Dinner at the Sam Funk Homestead**

**Back row:** (left to right): Rev. Van Valkenburgh, Anna Durrin, Sam Funk, Mrs. Sam Funk, George Durrin, Ernest Wilmoth (Wood barber), Bert Hancock or Williams (?), Dabney Miller (first Wood postmaster; also hardware store), Hal Durrin. **Front row:** Paul Van Valkenburgh, Hallie Funk, Louise Van Valkenburgh, Glea Funk, Ernest Funk, Mrs. Van Valkenburgh and two children.

We experienced many severe blizzards. Some of them I don't even like to think about, as they were extremely dangerous to ourselves and our livestock. Usually these terrible blizzards lasted about three days. At that time we had no radios, telephones or television to keep us posted on weather conditions. One cold day my son, Ernest, and I had to make a trip to Berkley to get groceries, as my husband was ill. We dressed warmly and took a foot warmer and some blankets along with us. While we were traveling along, we smelled something burning. The blankets had caught fire from the heat of the foot warmer. We soon extinguished the fire with snow. I knew the day was very cold, but I didn't realize it was the coldest day ever recorded in Wood (thirty-nine degrees below zero). I always had the children carry matches and paper with them during cold weather in case they got caught in a blizzard.

So much for these treacherous happenings. As the old saying goes, we homesteaders had to take the bitter along with the sweet.

To make a living on these small homesteads wasn't an easy matter. Many different things were done to make a few dollars; however, we didn't need as much money then as we do now. We accumulated several head of horses and cows, and as I mentioned earlier, we sold cream and butter. Sam broke sod for several homesteaders, did freighting from Winner and Valentine to Wood for the A. K. Wood Store, also broke horses for A. K. Wood to bring in additional income. Often times in those days if you needed a horse or two for extra farm work or for freighting, you could run in one from the range and work him. You were welcome to use other people's horses if you broke them well. Sam and Hal Durrin spent an entire summer and fall selling horses for use in World War I. For many years my husband traded and dealt in land and livestock with the Indians, as well as the white people. His partners were Mark Weed, Hal Durrin and Bill Larson. Whenever cattle were bought, they were trailed to the closest shipping point and sent from there to Omaha or Sioux City. Valentine, Murdo, or Winner, each about fifty miles from our place, were usually the towns Sam shipped from. Ada and Ernest helped their dad trail cattle to these shipping points. Feed for our livestock was never much of a problem in these years, as an abundant supply of wheat grass covered this land. My husband worked with the neighbors in putting up hay, which was a job lasting about two months. One time while mowing, Sam found a watch near a surveyors land stake. He figured that a surveyor or a locator must have lost it. My son, Bud, still carries this watch, which still keeps perfect time.

**Sam Funk with Ernest Funk on pony he broke for A. K. Wood's children. (A. K. was founder of Wood, S. D.)**

We could not have existed on our homestead without the helping hands of our good and loyal neighbors, who we will always remember. Our nearest neighbors were: Mr. and Mrs. James Mitchell; the Wagner family; Hal, George, Edith, Madge and Anna Durrin; and Mr. and Mrs. Wes Drummond. The only ones still living are Anna and Madge Durrin. Mr. Drummond will be remembered as opening and operating the first butcher shop in Wood. Every day Mr. Drummond rode a bicycle the eight miles into Wood to open up his butcher shop. At the end of fourteen months, Mr. Drummond and his family returned to their original home, Chillicothe, Ohio, where he again engaged in the meat business. He and his wife passed away several years ago, but his son, Rodman, still operates the butcher shop. With kind, warm-hearted neighbors and friends like these, many good times were spent together.

Getting to church and Sunday School was a slow process by team and horseback, but nevertheless almost everybody attended. Church and Sunday School were held in schoolhouses and homestead shacks. The first minister in our community was Rev. Van Valkenburgh. Later, when the Happy Hollow Church was built, Rev. Van Valkenburgh was still in charge of services. Unless the weather conditions were extremely disagreeable, the church was filled to capacity.

Our chief social activities were ice cream socials, pie and box socials, dances, Sunday dinners, picnics with their usual foot races and horse-shoe games.

Fortunately, we experienced very little sickness, and made it through the flu epidemic of 1918 unscathed. However, some of the children did have light cases of the flu, but we were still lucky as some people lost their lives with it. I used my home remedy of kerosene, lard, and turpentine, rubbed on the throat and chest and covered with a flannel cloth, in combating this disease. A spring tonic of sassafras tea, sulphur and molasses was a sure cure-all!

During our fourteen-year stay on the homestead our family increased from four to seven. The members of my family are: Gale (Bud), living at Enning, S. D.; Dwite, residing in Las Vegas, Nev.; Hoke, who passed away in 1932; Ernest, who lives near Ekalaka, Mont.; Mrs. M. C. Cordes (Hallie), living at Sturgis, S. D.; Mrs. Paul Ferguson (Ada), who also lives near Enning; and Mrs. Fritz Holtz (Glea), living near Denver, Colo. Our last three children, Bud, Dwite, and Hoke, were born on the homestead. Our family physicians were Dr. Schmitters or Dr. Pugh.

I write this history with mixed emotions. When I think back to the wagon, the walking plow that turned the sod, the dear old faithful horse that meant so much to us, all are now only a memory. We had lots of happiness on our homestead, as well as sorrows. I guess it takes a little of both to make better citizens of us.

I am now seventy-eight years old and in good health. I am still living on our home at Enning, S. D. (my son, Bud, and his wife live near me), and relive the memories of days gone by on the homestead.

**First Fourth of July Picnic held at J. T. Hocking's place, 1912. Left to right, in semi-circle: Edith Durrin, Hal Durrin, Mrs. Sam Funk and daughter, Glea, Hallie Funk, Sam Funk, Ada Funk, Anna Durrin.**

# Hidden Timber

**By Mrs. Harry Furrey**

(The Hidden Timber Ranch of the Edward L. Whiting family in Todd County, S. D., always held a certain fascination for the schoolmates of the younger members of the Whiting family at Spencer, Nebr. Mr. and Mrs. Whiting were well known from the time that Boyd County, Nebr., was first opened for homesteading in 1890. The Whiting home was located on the north side of the Niobrara River, just a mile or so west of the power dam, which is south of Spencer, Nebr. However, there was no town or dam there when the homesteaders were looking for a location. The trip across Holt County, through the sand was a hard one and the Whitings home was always open to all weary travelers. Throughout the rest of their lives those neighbors never forgot the many good meals they ate at Whitings while their horses were resting. Besides being a good cook, Mrs. Whiting will always be remembered for her meticulous housekeeping and her willingness to help others. By Bess Adrian.)

Edward L. Whiting was born at West Bloomfield, N. Y., August 29, 1848. At the age of 15 he enlisted in the Union Army where he served for the duration of the Civil War. Later he re-enlisted in the army and was sent out West. He was stationed at Fort Randall, in what was then Dakota Territory, where he met his future wife. Mary Herman was born at Fort Laramie, Wyoming Territory, June 9, 1860. Her father, Jacob Herman, was a government blacksmith. He was transferred to Fort Randall when Mary was 14 years old. The trip from Fort Laramie to Fort Randall was one of many frightening experiences. The government employees, their familes and the soldiers would place their wagons in a circle when they made camp for the night. This was to afford more protection in case of an attack, as some of the Indians were still quite hostile. On one occasion, they were attacked and one of their party was scalped.

Edward L. Whiting and Mary Herman were married July 22, 1880, at St. Ann's Church near Wheeler in Dakota Territory by Father J. T. Malo, a missionary Priest. They lived at Fort Randall until about 1884, then moved to what is now Boyd County, Nebr. They had ten children; Harriet Whitcher, Nellie Larmer, Edward L. Jr., David, Jacob, Thomas, Mary, Mabel, William and Louise Furrey. They lived on that farm until Mrs. Whiting's health failed in 1915 and they moved into Spencer, Nebr., where they resided the rest of their lives. However, during these years Mr. Whiting spent a great deal of time at the ranch in Todd County until he had both of his legs amputated, because of hardening of the arteries and was then confined to a wheel chair.

The ranch at Hidden Timber was started in 1908. For about ten years previous to that, Ed L. Jr., took care of cattle for his folks on a place at the mouth of Deer Creek in Tripp County. Then they decided to come to Todd County where more land was available to run cattle. Ed and Dave batched for a while, living in a sod house, then Harriet came to keep house for them. She, along with the Whiting boys went through all the hardships of pioneer days, making the long trips with horses and wagon to get supplies for the ranch as well as the lumber used in building the house and other buildings. After Harriet's marriage to W. J. Whitcher, they moved to a farm near Spencer, Nebr. The Whiting boys were all married during these years and some of them continued to run the ranch.

**Hidden Timber Ranch, About 1932**

Mr. Whiting passed away in January 1923. In the fall of that year, Mr. and Mrs. Whitcher purchased the Hidden Timber ranch and moved back to Todd County. They lived there until Harriet's death in July of 1958. Mr. Whitcher now resides in Winner and leases out the ranch.

The Whiting children living at the present time (April 1961) are; Ed at Mission, Tom at Hidden Timber, Jake and Bill at St. Francis, and Louise Furrey at Carter, all in S. D.

In the winter of 1925 - 26, Tom started a store in their house. When he would go to Winner, S. D., to get groceries and other supplies for the store he would bring the neighbors mail from the Post Office at O'-Kreek. This was very much appreciated as the ways of traveling then, were far from what they are today. The following summer they built a store building and the Hidden Timber Post Office was started with a route coming from Valentine, Nebr.

The name Hidden Timber comes from the trees that are almost hidden behind a hill and it is a very old landmark. There have been many tales told in bygone days about the happenings that were supposed to have taken place in this timber. One that is always remembered by the old timers is, "The ghost of a cowboy and his horse come out of Hidden Timber every night at midnight."

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## OF AREND-ROLAND

(Visible here April 24, 1957)
Comet of mystery, with two flaming tails—
Brilliant glow in the night-blue sky—
Puzzled, scientists compute; and, as it fades,
Stand agape and awed, even as I.

—Winifred Reutter, White River

# Homesteading Near Apex, S. D.

**As Told To Winifred Reutter**

Mrs. Roy Gatton homesteaded in the western part of Mellette County. She was Ruth Morris then. She came up from Fremont, Nebr., in the fall of 1914 and filed on the SE, S 29 41-30. Her father also homesteaded on the quarter just north of her.

The next April she came out again, bought the homestead shack of George Morrow and had it moved to her land. Then she went back to Nebraska to pack up before moving to South Dakota.

In May 1915 she and her dad shipped out in an emigrant car from Fremont to Winner. There they loaded their two wagons, and, driving the cows along also, they made their way West across the open range to their claims.

The first day they reached Carter, the next day they made it to Wood and the third day they arrived at their destination.

Cornering her Dad's quarter on the northwest was the homestead of Mr. and Mrs. Victor Knodell. They ran a store and a Post Office which they called Apex. This Post Office was officially named Knodell later on in 1919.

Ruth Morris hauled water from Knodells until her Father dug his well and struck nice soft water. Her dad did the required plowing for them and they planted corn, melons and garden stuff which grew real good.

When Knodell went to Winner, freighting, Mr. Morris went along and the trip took four or five days. Mrs. Knodell and Ruth visited and worked together, taking turns staying at each other's homes while the men were away.

In 1916 the neighbors gathered at the Twin Buttes school house for Sunday School. Mrs. Tripp was the Superintendent.

In 1917 Ruth Morris was married to Roy Gatton, another homesteader living east of her quarter. They were married in the home of Rev. Van Valkenburgh, the well known minister of the homesteaders. Then they moved over onto Roy's homestead.

Their children attended the North Ring Thunder School when Inez Dvorak was the teacher. Bob and Rhoda rode three miles on horse back to school. The next year when Mary was old enough to start to school they traveled in a buggy. The other Gatton children are Martha, Warren and Thomas.

Later Gattons moved to the Cody neighborhood, then they retired, moving to Winner. Mr. Gatton passed away in 1947 and Mrs. Gatton made her home in Winner until she moved to White River in 1961.

There her many friends come to see her and visit about the early Mellette County Days.

# The Marin Georgeff Story

**By Winifred Reutter**

(Note: Marin Georgeff asked me to write up his story for our book and so I did it at his dictation. Later, I sent him a copy of this story to check the dates and names. He told me he was very happy with the story as I had written it and altho we regret to report that Marin passed away Dec. 10, 1961, following a stroke, we are still using the story just as we wrote it because that was the way Marin said he wanted it in our book. Winifred Reutter.)

* * *

Down towards the north end of main street in White River lives a courageous couple in their lovely modern home. But it wasn't always so nice and pleasant for Mr. and Mrs. Marin Georgeff. They can tell stories of the hardships that they have gone through, both here in homesteading days, and previously in the old country. Hearing their adventures makes the listener realize that they have surely earned their comfortable way of life.

The memories of those hard years are still fresh in their minds and here are some of the things Marin Georgeff told me about his early experiences.

In 1905, Marin Georgeff, a young man of about 20 years of age, left the country of Turkey and went to Bulgaria. This was during a period of unrest, with wars and underground movements taking place in those countries. Marin made his way to his grandfather's home where he worked as a blacksmith for three years. All the young men were being drafted into the army there. In 1907 Marin traveled to Canada where he worked for a year on the railroad.

Marin Georgeff in 1916

In 1908 he went to St. Louis, Mo., to the home of a cousin. That was during a time of panic and depression. Few jobs were open and times were hard for everyone.

Young Marin started traveling from place to place—wherever he heard of available work. Among the many places that he found work was in a saw mill in Georgia, and later he worked in a factory for two years in Little Rock, Ark. In 1911 his travels brought him to the Black

Hills of South Dakota where he found employment at the Terry Peak mine for two years.

In 1912 he went back to Missouri until June when he came to Sioux Falls. He came out to White River that summer awhile before going back to St. Louis.

Something about Mellette County must have appealed to him because he came back again in October 1912 and he bought the blacksmith shop from a man by the name of Robinson. This shop was located near the present Frys' Frontier Service Station. Marin's friend, Vasil Dimitroff, came up about this time and helped him at the shop.

Marin (right) and Vasil Dimitroff by his claim shack

Next Marin bought a relinquishment on a homestead through Pat Navin, a real estate agent. This was NW 9 40-30, so he spent part of his time at the homestead to finish proving up on it.

The spring of 1913 had been very nice and pleasant weather, so few homesteaders were prepared for the awful storm that struck in March. Marin said that he and Vasil Dimitroff were living in a tent on Marin's claim when the big blizzard hit. They had carried hay and laid blankets over it to make a bed and were camping there, in the midst of the prairie, with very little food or fuel. The skies suddenly seemed to open up and empty the big snowstorm on Mellette County. The howling wind nearly blew the tent down. March 14, 1913, is one day he will never forget. They finally salvaged a two by four, 7-foot long, from a short distance away and it was their source of fuel for two days and two nights. They would brew a little tea and wonder how much longer the storm was going to last, and also if their tent was going to withstand the terrific wind. But all storms do come to an end. and March 15 and 16 the weather cleared nicely so the men could get out again. Marin's one horse, a saddle horse, had gone south of the tent, probably drifting with the storm, and was found later, frozen to death.

Marin began the hard job of walking those fifteen miles to town, wading through all the huge snowbanks left by the storm.

At his blacksmith shop he was surprised to find that the door had been broken open; and even more surprised to find it full of hogs when he looked in. It seemed that Fred Swartz had a bunch of hogs and no shelter for them during the storm, so he had moved them into Georgeff's blacksmith shop to keep them from freezing to death.

A small house was back of the blacksmith shop and this they moved out to the homestead to live in. Evidently they did not want to take any more chances on living through storms in a tent.

The summer of 1913 was tough sledding for many of the homesteaders out here in Mellette County getting their start, and Georgeff was no exception.

He remembers being down to twenty-five cents and living a whole week on nothing but potatoes because they were cheap and filling. Then a man came into the shop to get some material for his wagon. The bill amounted to $2.50 and the boys felt like millionaires. Now they could add a little variety to their spud diet.

Marin has the very best in furniture now but he still remembers his bed in the blacksmith shop. It was some boards laid across two saw horses. He put on a couple of quilts and that was it. Mellette pioneer people mostly were a young and hardy lot and probably slept soundly on similar beds after a hard day's work outdoors in the fresh air and bright sunshine of Dakota.

In the fall of 1913 a cousin, Mike Dimitroff, came out and lived on the homestead.

In 1914 Marin left his brother-in-law and cousin on the homestead while he worked in the blacksmith shop in White River. He also bought two horses and one cow by this time.

1915 was the year Marin was very sick with typhoid fever. Dr. Pugh took him to Dallas, S. D., where he spent thirty days in the hospital under the care of Dr. Winsett. Gust Legner ran the shop for him during the time when he was ill.

1915: Mr. Georgeff began to buy cattle; one bunch was purchased at the Tom Strange sale. From this start he eventually built up a large herd.

1918: World War I was on and Marin was signed up in the second age group. He was scheduled to leave White River for service on the 17th of November. Then the Armistice was signed November 11th, so Marin kept on ranching.

1919: The flu epidemic hit the United States and Mellette County had its share of sick people. Marin took sick out on the homestead. He was brought in to the schoolhouse, which was fixed up as an emergency hospital. He was there for two weeks under the care of Dr. Schmitters, along with many others. Also in 1919 his final citizenship papers came through, and this was the year that he sold his blacksmith shop to Gust Legner.

In 1920 he purchased a tractor from Chris Anders and began mechanized farming in addition to his ranching.

In 1927 Marin went back to Bulgaria and Greece to visit, and especially to see his mother. He thought of bringing her to the United States, but she decided not to come over; however, she did go to Bulgaria with him for a three-month's visit with relatives. While Marin was there, he persuaded a charming young lady to be his wife.

On February 5, 1928, Marin Georgeff and Vaselina Dimitroff were married, and on the third of March they left the old country to go to their American home so far away. They stayed in France for eight days in quarantine, then they boarded a huge steamer, Leviation, and sailed for the United States. This ship had been under construction and was confiscated by the United States. It was either poorly constructed or unbalanced as it shook or vibrated badly on the high seas. This did not add to the comfort of the passengers and many, including the new Mrs. Georgeff, were very seasick on the voyage.

On the 19th of March they landed in New York City, going from there to St. Louis to visit relatives. They sent Mike a telegram and when they arrived in Winner, her brother, Mike, and Gust Legner met them and brought them out to their Mellette County homestead.

For three years they lived in a basement before building a frame house in 1929. Later, in 1949, they built a large house on the farm.

In 1955 they bought a home in White River and moved there. In 1957 they sold the ranch to Bob Adrian.

Back in 1923 Marin had a very bad accident. He was seriously injured but was fortunate to be alive to tell his story. One day in December he had four head of horses on a wagon and was hauling sand from the Little White River. He was busy digging in the sand and shoveling it out when suddenly the whole sand-bank gave way and he was instantly buried alive. Only part of the top of his head was visible. Luckily, Marin's friend was there and he started at once to dig Georgeff out. He dug away the sand so Marin could get air again. When they got him out, they found out his chest was injured and he had also been hurt badly in his spine. They loaded him on a wagon and took him to the Rudolph Petr home. Dr. Bouza came out and patched him up the best that could be done under the circumstances. The doctor told Marin that he would probably have painful after-effects from this accident all the rest of his life. For eleven days he was a patient there in Petr's sod house.

Much later on, arthritis set in to plague Marin. However, he makes the best of his suffering, and always has a cheery greeting for everybody. He also carries on an interesting and extensive correspondence with many relatives and friends back in the old country.

**Mr. and Mrs. Marin Georgeff at their present home in White River**

Mr. and Mrs. Georgeff have some very fascinating works of art and handicraft that have come to them from across the ocean.

They, and their relatives, have known what it was like to flee for their very lives during enemy invasions over in the old country. The Georgeff's also experienced and lived through all the hardships of pioneering in the new prairie land of Dakota. Now they can relax in their beautiful home and visit with their many friends about all their interesting adventures.

# N. A. Gerig

**By Carroll Gerig**

March 28, 1961

Dear Mellette County Friends:

I feel almost as though I know you, since I've heard about you and the other White River folks ever since I can remember. Thank you for your interesting letter. We have actually gotten several requests from various people for historical information and photos, but it is not so easy for Dad to write letters as it once was, and we, as all of you, have been busy.

We are sending several photos of various types, "on loan" and you are welcome to use any you can, but please return them when you are through with them. Some persons, on them, Dad could not identify as it is hard for him to see, so maybe you can. Incidentally, he thought he was a charter member of the Happy Hollow Church. The history lists only one, Mrs. Cora Moore. (I believe they refer to the Charter of Wood Church as there are several Happy Hollow Charter members living. W. R.)

**N. A. Gerig and Shack, 1913**

**Frame for Happy Hollow Congregational Church Indiana Ranch buildings in background.**

Dad often thinks of the 16 years spent in South

Dakota, with many fond memories as well as those of the hard times. Mother and Dad apparently helped with many of the ventures in the area. He often states that he went there with nothing and came out the same way. They went there "on their honeymoon" and remained "honeymooners" until Mother died about five years ago, after having gone to Clinton, Okla., and then to Missouri. After a rough time here at first, he developed a small weekly newspaper into a nice, small city daily.

Dad went to White River in 1912 as a homesteader, and filed a claim on what later became the "Indiana Ranch" about half way between White River and Wood. During the first year, he worked some for Fred Kirch at the Wood Pioneer, and more at the Tripp County Journal in Winner. He was employed to teach at Cody School in 1914, and was later principal of the school at White River. He then farmed and raised cattle.

With the purchase of the Mellette County News from a Mr. Lubker he continued in the newspaper business until he left the area in 1928 or '29.

He helped start the first white church, the Happy Hollow Congregational Church, and later helped build the Methodist Church in White River, being a charter member of both. He was Sunday School Superintendent at White River for several years, being active in other civic affairs as well.

His health is comparatively good, but feels that he could not undertake a trip to South Dakota alone. I would like to go too, but really cannot take time from the family or business.

Dad will be 77 on May 13, 1961. He is living with us at 6 Bennett Street, Flat River, Mo., and would be happy to hear from any of you.

# The Glatfelter Story

**By John Glatfelter**

I don't remember why I decided to homestead but I do remember that I arrived in White River in the spring of 1912. I have forgotten the reason I picked the piece of land that I did but later I was glad that I had located there. It was NE 15 41-28. Later this neighborhood was called the Pure Water and Happy Hollow districts. The name Pure Water came from the pure tasting and soft water found there. The "Happy" came from the happy-go-lucky and friendly people, and "Hollow" took in a strip three to four miles wide and five to six miles long.

My stay was short, about three years, but I still remember it as a happy event. When I left, I sold my claim to my pal and friend, Homer Wilson, for $3,000.00. I put the money in the bank and moved to Omaha, Nebr., to work on construction which was plentiful there. Then I enlisted in 1916. After the war was over, I came home and, as the work was good there, I decided to stay. But in the meantime, before I knew it, the bank failed. The bank was in a guaranty fund, but so many banks failed that it failed too. I got forty dollars back in three years.

Happy Hollow filled up quite fast with homesteaders. Many, like the Turners, Gallaghers, Grahams and Petersens, were families with children and were farmers. Nobody had any money, but everybody helped everyone else. I was a carpenter and needed the exercise!

I remember Tom Gallagher well. The first summer we built their house. It was a 12 x 16 with a lean-to on the west side, with a roof almost flat. It had roofing paper on it and the house had a one-half pitch roof with shingles on it. That summer a storm came up with hail as big as hen eggs. That paper roof looked like a sieve. I went up there and Mrs. Gallagher was crying so hard I felt sorry for her. Tom said, "I'm going to town and get some shingles." "But Tom," I said, "The roof is almost too flat for shingles." But Tom said he was going to get them anyway. That was the only time I ever remember putting on shingles while sitting down.

Art Turner and Al Moorhouse were two wonderful Englishmen—Al being on the quiet side and Art always ready for a good laugh. Art and I dug a well on his place. We went down fifty feet through that hard pan. It was still as dry down there as on top. We used the post hole digger and tested down six more feet, then quit digging and put all that dirt back in the hole. He said, "Too bad, you can't have a well where you want it." The Grahams were another one of our fine neighbors. Mrs. Graham taught in the first schools, I believe. Pete Petersen was a lot of fun, too. I think he was a Swede, and they had two nice little girls.

There were a lot of bachelors, too. One was Gus Kylen, a saloon keeper from Lexington, Mo. He lived on the quarter north of mine, and from his place it was a mile east to Turner's house.

We two bachelors had been over to Turners so often for butter, eggs and bread that we had made sort of a foot path where it was easy walking. One evening we went over for supplies and sat too long, visiting. When we started home, it was really dark. We were going along, talking together when I noticed strange things. First there was a clump of brush, I didn't recognize, then rough footing underneath. Then a hill loomed up in front of us and the horizon looked different. I realized that we had strayed off our path and were lost. I told Gus, and he began crying like a child. I started laughing at him but he was crying so hard he couldn't hear me. I admit, I began to get uneasy, too. Gus said he didn't want to stay out on the prairie all night. I then remembered that when we left Turners, the wind had been blowing from the south. We were now facing it, consequently were going south. Just how long we had been traveling south we did not know. So we changed our course and headed west, keeping the wind to our left. I knew we would have to go across the big draw that bounded my claim on the east. I knew I would recognize it when we came to it. We pushed our way through brush so heavy and thick we could hardly get through. Once I fell straight down into a washout. It was only two feet deep but I thought I was going down into a coal mine. We finally came to the big draw and climbed up the bank.

I told Gus, "I think we are south of my shack, let's go north now." Soon we came to a plowed patch—my garden. "Gus," I said, "I know where we are now. My shack is ahead about 200 feet." Well, you should have seen him go. When we walked in and lit the lamp he was sure happy.

Another fine friend was Charlie Kerlin with his sound advice and helping hand. When we had Sunday

School, we often had to move out about everything but the stove to make room for everybody. A 10 x 12 was a small sized shack. All the families and the bachelors would be there. Of course in the summertime, classes were held outside. Miss Brown was another wonderful person. She wrote a lot of Happy Hollow news items for the Mellette County Pioneer. She wrote under the name of Uncle Rufus and she originated the Happy Hollow Rabbit in her poems and articles. Here are three of her poems copied from cards she made.

### THE HAPPY HOLLOW RABBIT

O, it is a comely habit, says the Happy Hollow Rabbit,
To tell your friends you love them, once a year.
There is no place where skies are bluer,
Or where friends are any truer, than they are in Happy Hollow, I declare.

### HOMESTEAD DAYS

Quoth the rabbit, I see a change
Has been made upon the range,
As I try the old familiar trail to follow.
But here's hoping you don't lack
The Christmas spirit of the shack,
In those dear old homestead days in Happy Hollow.

### CHRISTMAS AGAIN

And in my mind, I wander back
To a certain little shack,
In Happy Hollow.
Where the days seemed never long,
And the nights were spent in song,
And the whole world to us belonged—in Happy Hollow.

—By Grace Brown Hanna

Miss Brown was from Kearney, Nebr., and was married at the Gallagher home to a Mr. Hanna. She wanted an Indian style wedding so they had Indian blankets draped over themselves. There was quite a crowd that attended and of course a big feed that went with every neighborhood gathering. He was not a homesteader so they went back to his home to live.

I experienced a prairie fire while on the range, which was not fun. We noticed the smoke off in the distance real early one morning. It was coming up from the south and southwest. Several said it would be in Happy Hollow by noon. A bunch of us went several miles to meet it. We had several barrels of water on a wagon. We used old pieces of carpet to dip in the water and try to whip the flames out. We couldn't stop it, all we could do was to keep it from spreading on the sides while the people up ahead plowed fire guards. We finally put it out but by that time we were back near our home. Nobody had stopped to eat that day.

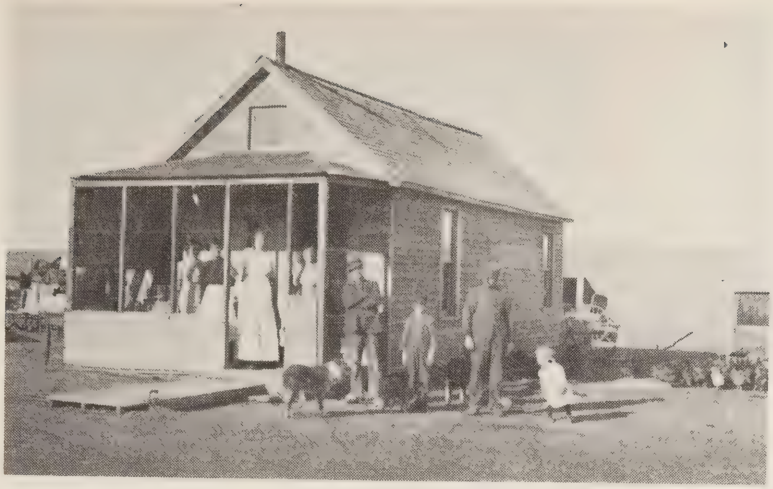
There are a lot of experiences I wouldn't like to go through again, including getting lost. I remember a blizzard one winter that kept me indoors all day. The snow was as fine as flour and would come through the keyhole like steam. I watched it through the window and the snow in the air outside also looked more like steam. I have never seen anything like it before or since.

I would give a million, figuratively speaking of course, to tramp over the whole country again and see the rattlesnakes trying to get away from me like they used to. I still have some of their rattles. This is all out of the question now because nine years ago I had an operation on my left hip like Arthur Godfrey had, and now must use a cane the rest of my life.

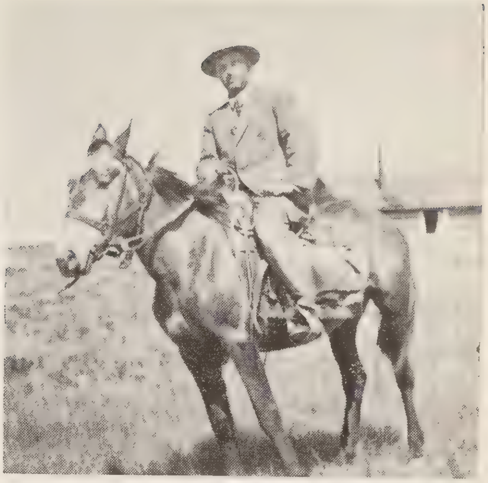
When I left the Hollow it was 28 degrees below zero. I rode to Winner with a man who was to bring a load of freight back. He had four horses on the wagon and when we arrived in Winner, they looked like they were covered with soap suds, but it was frost. We walked about all the way, too, to keep warm.

I can say I hated to leave, as I was leaving more friends, real friends than I ever had in my life. Good luck to everyone.

**The train on which John Glatfelter came to Winner.**

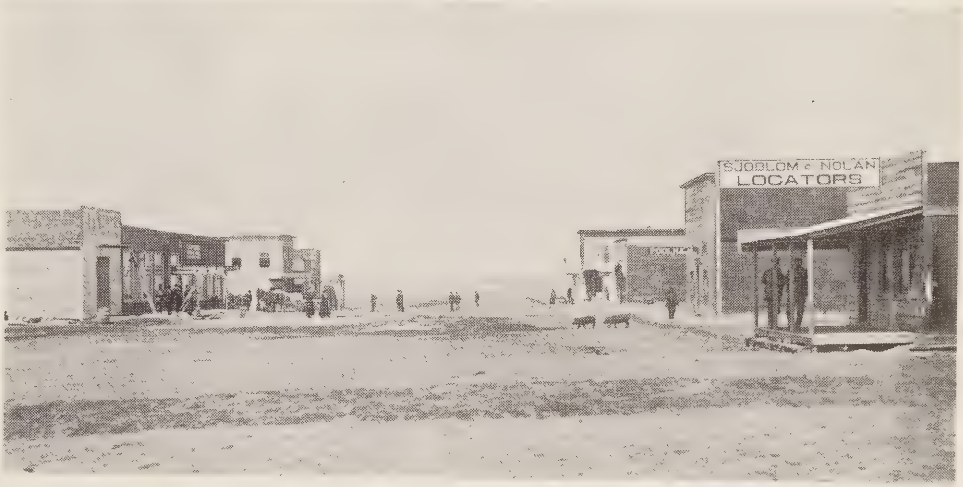


Gallagher Home

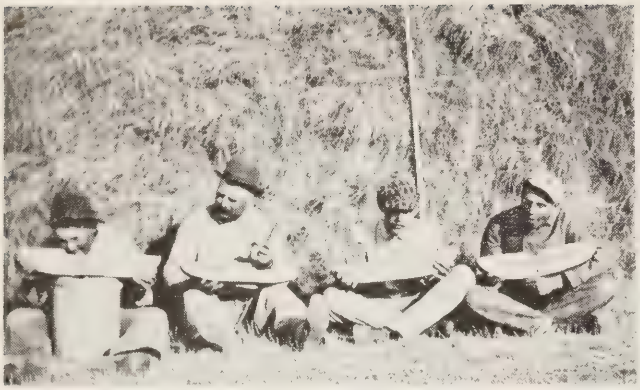


John Glatfelter

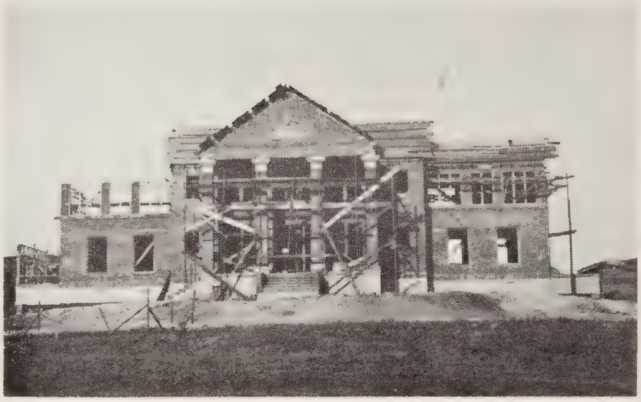
White River Main Street,
looking north, 1912


SJOBLOM & NOLAN
LOCATORS

Laundromat of 1912



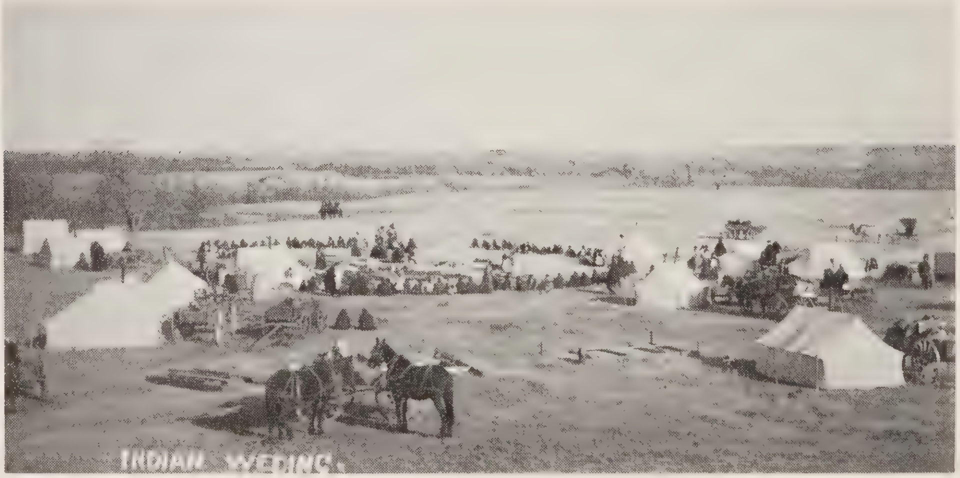
Homer Wilson, Tom and Selby Gallagher and friend, eating watermelons in Happy Hollow.



Building Rosebud Indian Hospital - 1914

Indians at the Issue Station

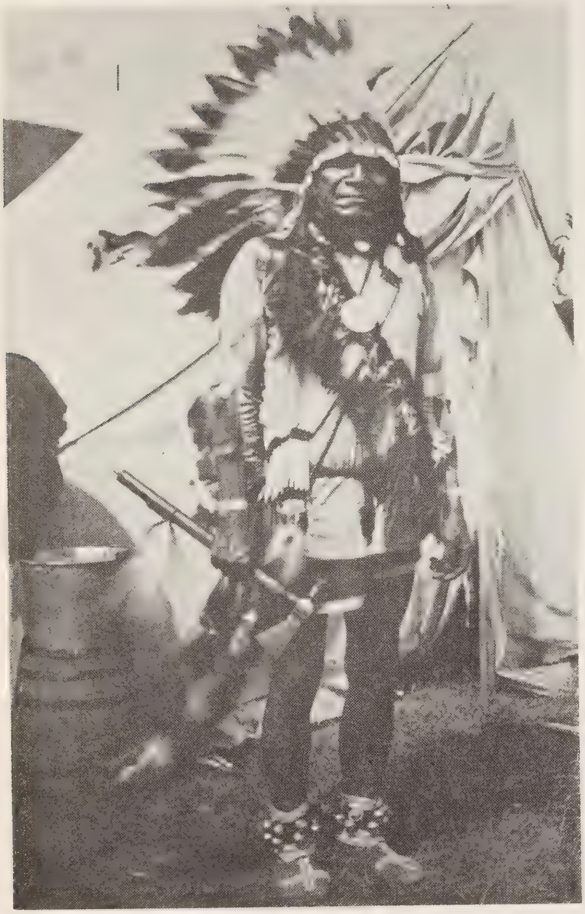
Indian Wedding (Menard)
Near Wood


INDIAN WEDING.

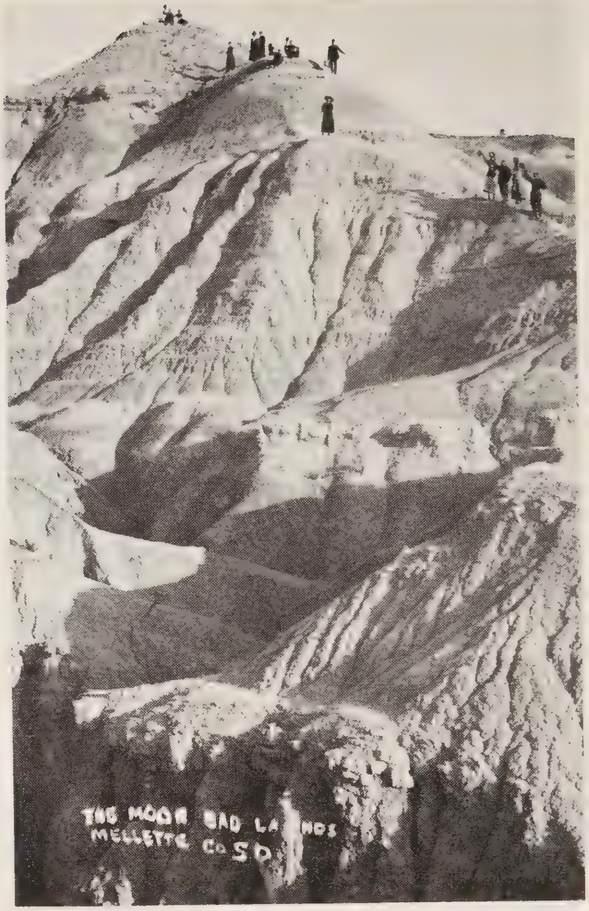
Country Fair Display, Wood, S. D.

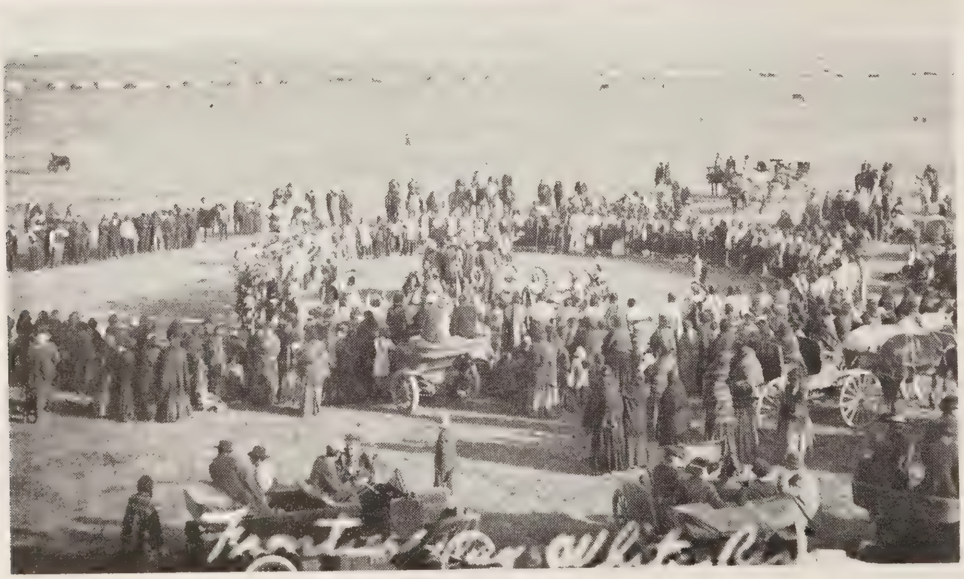
Roy Hodges

Birds Eye View - Winner S.D.

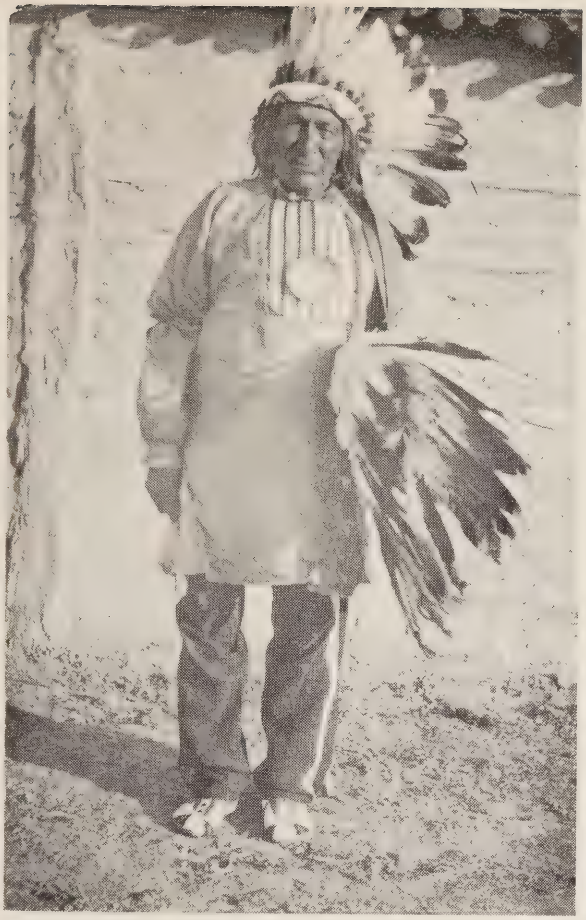


Scratch Face

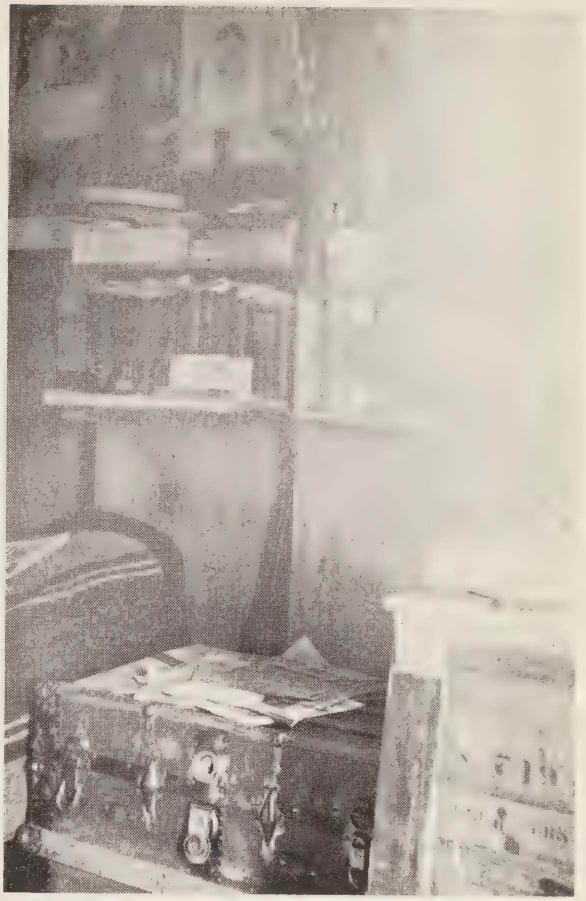

THE MOON BAD LANDS
MELLETTE CO. S.D.



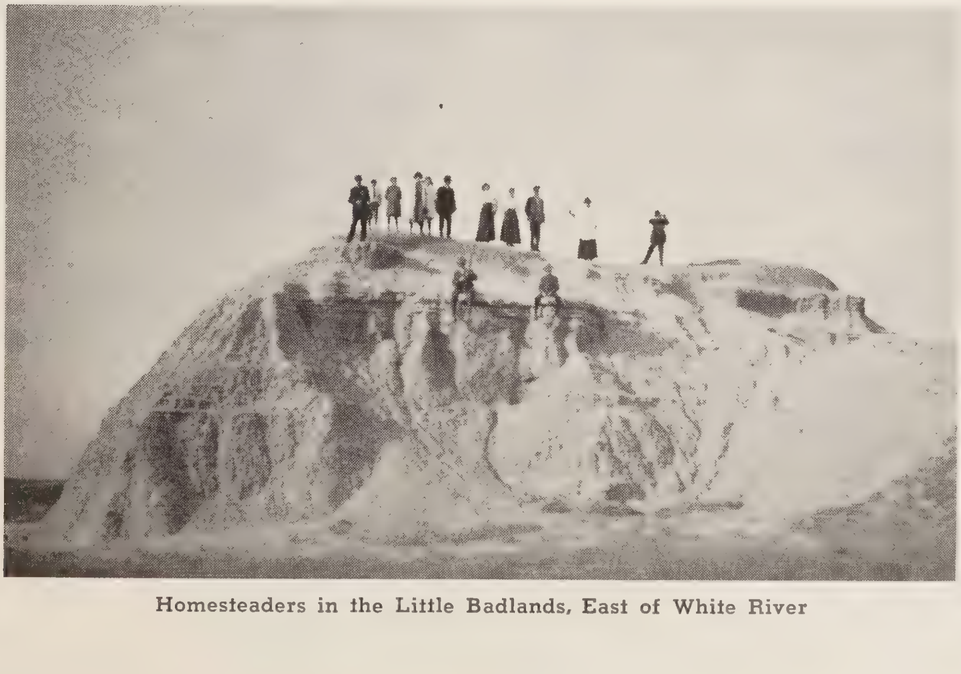
Frontier Days



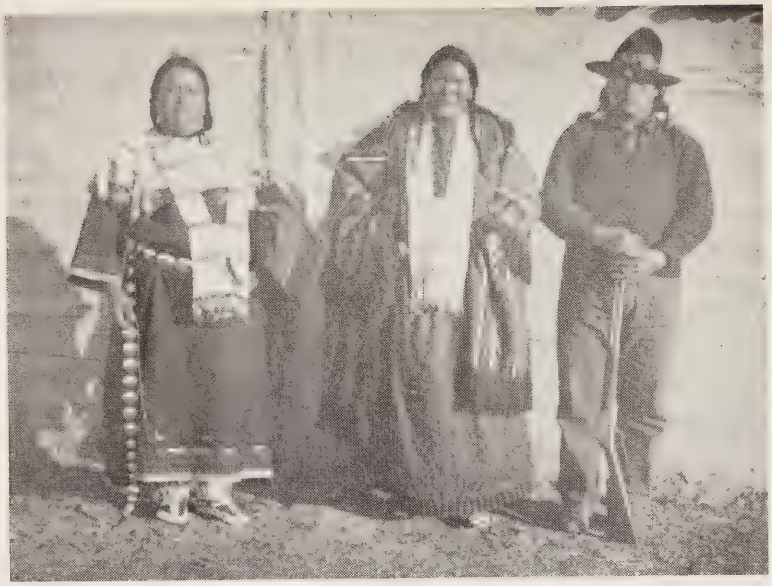
White River Indian
By Council House, 1912



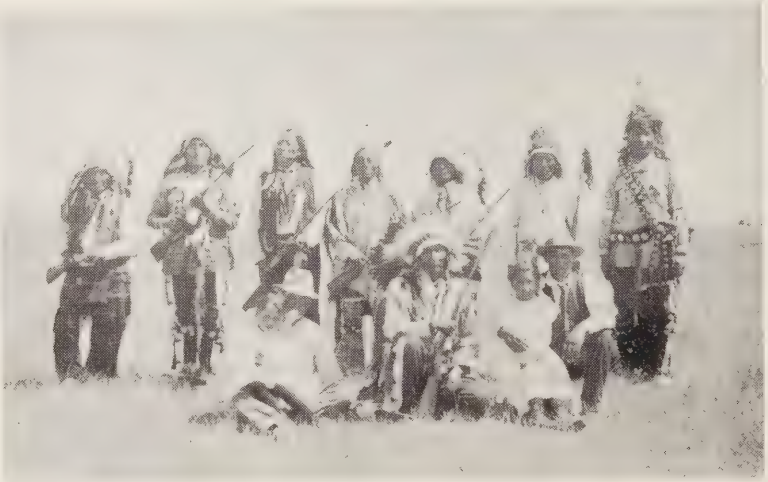
Interior of Glatfelters'
Homestead Shack



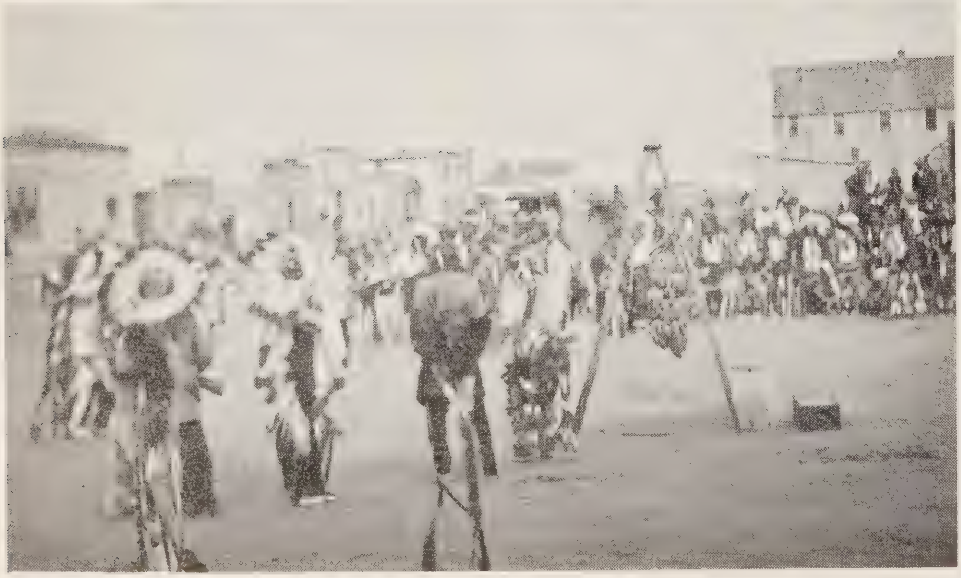
Homesteaders in the Little Badlands, East of White River



Indians by White River
Council Hall, 1912



Indians and Whites
at White River
in 1912



Indians dance for groceries. (See bananas, apples, and cracker box.)

# Homestead Days as I Recall Them

By Mrs. Elijah Graham

We came to Mellette County to homestead in the fall of 1912. We drove a covered wagon through the country from Selby, Iowa. It took two weeks to make the trip. When we got to Bonesteel we met Glen Kingsbury and his wife who were also driving through to their homestead. From there on we came along together.

Our homestead was about midway between Wood and White River. (Roy Valburg lives there now, 1961.) When we drove onto our quarter of land we were greeted by a huge rattlesnake, the first one I had ever seen. Lige killed it with a monkey wrench. Our trophy was a string of fourteen rattles. That night it snowed and the next day John Glatfelter came by and said there was a neighbor over the hill who had a barn built and had a cookstove in it. Our oldest boy, Doyle, was a baby, fourteen months old, and we took him over there to get warm. This was our first meeting with the Art Turner family.

During the next few months, shacks and small houses began appearing on almost every quarter. There was not much work to be done after the required ten acres of land was broken and planted so there were a good many community gatherings and get-together picnics. Miss Grace Brown named our community "Happy Hollow."

**Miss Grace Brown, who named "Happy Hollow."**

Mrs. Groom started a Sunday School in her home. We sat on planks laid across nail kegs in her house and the children's Sunday School class was held in her chicken house. A little minister by the name of Van Valkenburgh came out from beyond White River to preach for us. We soon got the urge to build a church. Jim Mitchell, Pete Petersen, Bis Nollsch and Lige hauled the lumber with teams and wagons from Valentine, Nebr. Many of the men helped build it. The Happy Hollow church was the first church built for white people in Mellette County. It started out to be a community church, but due to our love and respect for the little minister, it was voted upon completion to have it be a Congregational Church. A good many of the people in Happy Hollow were charter members of that church.

The first school was taught by Miss Bramer in the shack vacated by Gus Kylen. The Happy Hollow schoolhouse was built later on, on the quarter east of us, and I taught the first school in it. It was not a large school then. Naomi and Clark Gallagher, Ruth Houseman, Bud and Sis Turner, Elizabeth, Mathilda and Willie Sorensen were the pupils. Miss McVay was the next teacher and Mrs. Durman, Miss Miller, Mrs. Carmichael, Ethel Phillips, Violet Bochover, Bessie Shanks and Nathalie Burke were some of the later teachers there.

**Happy Hollow School, taught by Mrs. Graham.** Left to right, **back row:** Mrs. Lige Graham, Mathilda and Elizabeth Sorensen, Naomi and Clark Gallagher. **Front row:** Mrs. Graham's boy, Doyle, Winifred and Bud Turner, Andy Sorensen.

Some of the early homesteaders were George Schanbacker, Mrs. Groom, Grace Brown, Frank Jarboe, Mr. and Mrs. Bill Palmer, Scottie Merrill, Neils Neilson, Bis Nollsch, Mr. and Mrs. Pete Petersen, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Sjoholm, Fritz Lyons, Al Moorhouse, Homer Wilson, John Glatfelter, Gus Kylen, Mrs. Houseman, Mr. and Mrs. B. R. Briggs, Mr. and Mrs. Ray Briggs, John and Neal Staat, Mr. and Mrs. Ray Peck, Mr. and Mrs. Tom Gallagher, Al Wolford, Mr. and Mrs. Art Turner, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Tisdell, Mr. and Mrs. Noah Gerig, Alice and Anna Lundberg, Homer Gillespie, John Endes, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Barcal, Mr. and Mrs. John Smith, Mr. and Mrs. John Gretschman, Kate Didier, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Swartz, Mr. and Mrs. Jim Mitchell, Mr. and Mrs. Carl Sorensen, Jim Hardy, Charles Kerlin, George Palmer, Mr. and Mrs. Jake Scholl, Paul Werner, Mr. and Mrs. Art Werner, as well as ourselves and others.

The first funeral we attended was for an infant born to Mr. and Mrs. John Gretschman. Fred Swartz made a little home-made casket and gilded it on the outside. It was a beautiful little baby and the funeral was held in the home. Somehow, everyone felt sad and as if they were a long ways from civilization.

The first wedding we attended was at the Gallagher home when Grace Brown married Mr. Hanna, her girlhood sweetheart. The ceremony took place in the evening out-of-doors beside a camp fire. A friend, Charles Kerlin, gave her away. The bride wore a beautiful Indian blanket, and most of the neighborhood witnessed the event.

Our income was pretty scant. We had potatoes, cabbage, etc. from the garden to last through the winter. A cow or two and some chickens furnished us with milk and eggs. Young prairie chickens or a young jack rabbit helped with the meat problem. Lige hauled coal and groceries from Murdo for the merchants in White River to help with a little additional cash. We still thought we lived next door to heaven for we had 160 acres of God's

HAPPY HOLLOW
HAPPY

**Happy Hollow Boosters Picnic, 1914**

green earth; but we soon learned that it was brown more times than it was green. We always hoped for a better crop next year. One year we planted some red kidney beans and when they were harvested in the fall we had nine bushels of them. We could not find anyone to buy them, so at least we had beans for some time.

Everyone baked their own bread and churned their own butter. All the water was carried into the house from the well, then later, carried out as slop for the hogs. The windmill pumped water for the stock, but water for the house was pumped by hand. The washing was done on the wash board, or later by a hand-powered washing machine. The houses were heated with coal or wood stoves, and light came from kerosene lamps which had to be washed every day. All of the children's clothes were made by hand so the women of the house had no trouble keeping busy. We needed also to keep well as the nearest doctor was at Murdo, thirty-five miles away. When sickness did catch up with us the neighbors helped each other out as best they could. We went to town with a team and spring wagon once a week to get the mail and the groceries. Jesse Brown ran the general store and post office in White River and Frank Perry helped him.

Many nights I laid awake listening to the coyotes howl and the Indians beating their tom-toms and chanting their weird music which to me, a gal of 22, was more blood curdling than musical. Prairie fires, too, were a constant concern. Often the men fought them several days before they were put out.

The men folks had little to do those first few winters. So some of them spent a good deal of time riding horseback through the hills with a bunch of hounds following them, hunting coyotes. Sometimes they were lucky and one time Lige came home with three of them hanging from his saddle. This was quite a catch. The county paid a bounty for them, and with the sale of the hides they netted a tidy sum, besides the fun he had catching them. However, one spring I had put about one hundred baby chicks outdoors in a flat box in the sun. One old hound came along and ate the whole bunch—that was the time when Lige got rid of the hounds for sure!

After the homesteads were proved up on, many of the people left. Some, of course, remained for a long while. But now after fifty years, few of the people who used to live in Happy Hollow in the homesteading days are still there. Many of them have passed to the great beyond, and others have moved to far away places. As for us, we are still kicking and live in Yakima, Wash.

# Frank Hakl's Homestead Story

**As Told To Winifred Reutter**

I, Frank Hakl of Wood, S. D., came from Lake Andes in October 1911 and registered at the land Office at Chamberlain, S. D. Then I went back and got a job north of Avon, S. D. I was picking corn there about two weeks later when I read my name in the Sioux City Daily newspaper. It stated that I was the winner of Number 21 in the drawing. Several days later I received a notice from the land Office at Gregory, S. D., telling what number I had drawn and that I would be notified later about the filing date. I received notice in March of 1912 that I was to appear at the map room in the courthouse at White River, S. D., on April 15, 1912, at 8 A. M. to file on a quarter of land in Mellette County.

I boarded the train at Scotland, S. D., April 10, 1912. We came by way of Mitchell and arrived in Chamberlain about 5:00 P. M. where we learned that the railroad bridge across the Missouri River had been taken out by high water.

We stayed in Chamberlain over night and the next morning we were taken across the river by a large ferry boat.

The Westbound train was on the tracks about one fourth mile from the river. We walked to it. There were also two dray wagons loaded with baggage and freight. I remember that the place where the train had backed up to, was on a high grade and the horses could not back the dray wagons up to the train. So they hitched a block and tackle from the train platform to the back of the wagon to help get the dray wagon close enough to the train to unload the freight.

We arrived in Murdo, S. D., about 2:00 P. M. There were four of us who were headed for White River. We hired a man with an open car to take us to White River.

Ice Takes Chamberlain Bridge Out, 1910

We had a flat tire on the way and had to stop to fix it. He charged us three dollars each, for the trip. As soon as we got into Mellette County I remember, the driver stopped the car and we got out. Taking his spade he'd brought with him, we dug holes in the ground to see what kind of soil was in Mellette County, while the driver fixed the flat. And then we went on to White River to file on our homesteads.

We arrived in White River about 5:00 P. M. and took a room at the hotel building that is now the Lodge Hall in White River. It was still under construction. The outside was all enclosed and the roof was finished. The main floor, also the second floor, were laid and there was also an attic. The studdings were in for the partitions between the rooms and they were covered with red-rosin paper. Couch covers and throw rugs were hung in the doorways to serve as doors. Many people were staying there and all the space was taken up.

We got our meals in a small sized circus tent. It was located on a spot just west of the present J. Carr Implement building location.

My number was 21 and I filed on number 19 because some of the people that held early numbers had failed to show up. In the forenoon of April 15, 1912, we went to the courthouse in White River. My locators were Hank Slaughter and Sheppard. We were called into the map room by rotation according to our numbers. We went in four at a time. There were several locators working in the area and when a man's number was called his locator went into the room with him. A large map was hanging on the wall showing the land left open for homesteading. I went up and selected NE 14 41-26. A Government man put a tack in the map to show that that quarter was taken. And the locator recorded it for you. The next step was to send a notice of your filing to Murdo where a temporary office was set up and then the material was sent to Chamberlain.

The advertisements in the papers called this free land but it cost $14.00 filing fees, twenty-five dollars or more for locators and from 50¢ to $6.00 per acre, depending on the lay of your land. One fifth of the money was to be paid down and five percent interest in advance. Payments spread out annually over five years.

I started back East on April 16 and arrived back at my former home the next day. And I began preparing for the trip back out to Mellette County. For the trip out I built a camp wagon. I built a frame 7 x 10 feet to be mounted on the wagon box. It had ridge poles and was covered like a tent. This had two hooks that held it to the wagon. When I arrived at the homestead I could take it off and set it on the ground, and there was my camp to live in. My brother and I started out from Lake Andes about June 8, arriving in Mellette County June 12, 1912. I bought a wooden beam breaking plow and with that broke five acres and planted it to corn. It was late but made a little corn and some fodder to feed my horses along with the prairie hay. Next, I built a house 14 x 16, and a barn 16 x 16.

I went back to Lake Andes with my team and camp wagon in July. There I did custom work again and finished a long threshing run October 10th. On October 14, 1912, at Tyndall, S. D., I was married to Hattie Blankenhagen. We started out with a team and camp wagon for our Mellette County homestead. We arrived in Mellette County October 19, 1912. I mowed some more hay for the horses. I also made a trip to Winner to get coal and a little furniture. Otherwise we did our shopping in Wood.

Hakl at Lake Andes, 8-bottom plow

My first neighbors in Mellette County were W. D. Armstrong of Ottumwa, Iowa; Mr. and Mrs. Percy Worthwine of northwest, Iowa; Mr. and Mrs. F. S. Richardson of Sioux Falls; George Clayball of Newton, Kans.; Frank Bleha of Gann Valley, S. D.; Frank Boyles, Platte, S. D.; Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Gustafson, Vermillion, S. D. (I am fortunate to have two of their sons, Ed and Carl Gustafson, as my neighbors yet.)

In 1913 some of the neighbors who moved in were Elmer and Ernest Aeschbacher, Mr. and Mrs. S. R. Langley and three children.

Before I married I bought my bread from Mrs. Isaac Kaufman in Wood, S. D. She was the mother of Merrill Kaufman, now of Winner, S. D. She was always so kind and friendly that I enjoyed dealing with her.

We had a very mild winter up until about March 14, 1913, when we had a severe blizzard. It started to snow about five o'clock Tuesday evening with some wind. During the night it turned into a blizzard and

Wednesday the visibility was zero all day. By Thursday morning it began to clear up.

We had a mild snowstorm again about mid-April, but from then on it was fairly dry all summer. However we had a good garden with many watermelons and squash also the corn crop was good. In 1913 I broke 12 acres for myself and eleven acres for Armstrong—all with horses, and how I wished for my steam engine. We milked many cows at that time and it was a lot of work to get the horses, harness and hitch up to do the field work, between choretimes.

In 1917 we started a grove of cottonwoods and also a small orchard of mulberries, apple trees, compass cherries and plums. These were bearing by 1920. I remember my wife canned over a hundred quarts of cherries that year. In 1922 our friends from Lake Andes came out to get cherries, we had so many.

I can remember how happy we were in May of 1918 when we bought a 1917 Model T car from Chris Anders. It ran for us for fourteen years and I did all the repairing necessary on it myself. It had kerosene side lights but the head lights were run off the magneto.

**Mr. and Mrs. Frank Hakl and Ardath with their Faithful Model T.**

During these years we hauled our drinking water from Wood and watered our cattle on Armstrong's quarter at first. We moved our buildings to the present location in 1920. We had a nice plum thicket quite by accident. We had thrown the wild plum pits out and when I dug a cellar under the house the dirt from the excavation covered the pits. The plums grew and we had a beautiful plum thicket real handy. We enjoyed the fruit and the birds that came to make their homes there.

In 1922 we planted five hundred trees in a shelterbelt.

We always milked a lot of cows until the dry years came. Hay became scarce and expensive so we sold our milk cows in 1934.

In 1935 I bought a tractor. I was so glad that I didn't have to work horses any more. I was able to maintain, repair and overhaul it by myself and enjoyed doing it.

We had two daughters: Dorothy who passed away, and Ardath who is Mrs. Byron B. Hinman and lives in Tripp County.

My wife passed away March 10, 1956, and I live alone, still on the homestead.

I have been asked about the lucky person who drew number one in the homestead drawing for Mellette County. The name was Mary J. Kendall from Rapid City, S. D. She chose NE 15 41-26, which was not very far from us. I remember that her husband was in a wheel-chair and she did a little baking to sell to the homesteaders while waiting for her papers to be filed. Later she sold the land to a John Renwick from Missouri, for a sum, reported to be $1,250.00. Renwick in turn sold to a Mr. Correll, who sold to a Mr. Sturdevant. The next owner was Frank Richardson who sold it to Mr. Brink. Then Erdman Stumer of Spencer, Nebr., later of Dallas, S. D., took this land over. The next owner was Ade Stumer, and his son-in-law, Wally Laudenslager owns it now.

That makes nine owners during a period of fifty years for the number one Mellette County homestead that was so highly advertised and so coveted by all of the homesteaders who registered. Mrs. Kendall was on hand to file on that memorable morning of April 15, 1912, and also had her picture taken with a group inculding the first twenty-five people who filed that first forenoon, with some of their friends and locators.

All of my neighbors and friends cannot be mentioned in this brief account but nevertheless they are thought of kindly and often. And those who have gone on ahead are not forgotten. And neither will I ever forget those early years when I homesteaded in Mellette County.

(The picture of Mr. Hakl with the first 25 Mellette County filers and others as well as a list of the first 100 filers names, appear in Book I, "Mellette County Memories." W. R.)

# Mrs. Hale's Story

**By Mrs. Elmo Hale**

I will tell you how we happened to come to Mellette County. My sister, Blanche, who was Mrs. Noah Asbury, homesteaded near White River. Then she came to see us in Regan, N. D.

She told us about all the wonderful things going on in White River and Mellette County. So Mr. Hale, Bernard and Irene went home with her. Irene worked for the Blackburns; Mr. Hale and Bernard worked for Ervin Townsend.

In the summer of 1915 we filed on a small piece of land joining Townsends. This was about eight miles south of White River.

On August 12, 1921, our daughter Dorothy was born.

I don't know which I was most afraid of, at first, the Indians or the rattlesnakes. On the Fourth of July, Gaylord Thompson was bitten by a rattlesnake. In the spring of 1922 the children told of seeing a lot of snakes on a hillside and Mr. Hale went over there and killed around thirty of them.

It was storming so bad the night Dorothy was born that we couldn't go for help. So Mr. Hale had to be the Doctor. When Maurice heard her cry he said, "Daddy, put that cat out."

We lived in and around White River until August of 1934, then we moved to California where all our children but Irene Wheeler are living.

Everett married Orpha Hitchings, they have a baby buried at White River. Helen married Rupert Hitchings, she died in White River and is buried there. Bernard married Alma Manke and had one boy, born in White River. Dorothy married John Drake and had one daughter. Barbara Due has a little girl. Irene has one boy, Gary.

If I counted right we have 25 grandchildren and 16 great grandchildren.

# Californian Recalls Neville, S. D.

**By Mrs. George Harrison**

We came to Mellette County, S. D., the first part of January 1920, from Wheaton, Pottawatomie County, Kans. My husband, George Harrison, had made a trip to South Dakota in September 1919 with Fred Schwant and had bought the farm south of White River where my son, Gerald Harrison, still lives.

My husband bought the farm from real estate agents, Brodball and Terpin, for $40.00 per acre. They had bought the place from Mr. and Mrs. Asbury.

**Asbury Homestead Shack, mentioned by Mrs. Harrison. (Helen Fridy picture)**

We decided to move to South Dakota from Kansas because we desired to raise more cattle. Grazing land was very scarce and difficult to buy or to rent in the part of Kansas where we were living. We sold our farm in Kansas, and machinery, furniture, etc. We only kept enough furniture to start housekeeping in that three room house that was on the farm we bought in South Dakota. We also kept one team of horses, a bull dog, lumber wagon, spring wagon and some machinery.

My husband left Wheaton, Kans., on Christmas Eve in a railroad box car with our belongings. He was routed by the railroad company clear around through Iowa to Murdo, S. D. The five children and I were to come one week later by the train and he was to wait for us at Murdo, then take us to White River with team and wagon. After he had departed, I learned that I could go via Lincoln, Nebr., to Winner, S. D., in half the time and half the price of the other route. I sent a telegram to Fred Schwant to that effect.

We left Wheaton Kans., on January 1, 1920, arriving in Winner late at night January 2, and no one was there to meet us. We went to a rooming house and stayed that night, then, the next morning, I began to try to find someone that I could hire to take us to White River. I could not find anyone who would make the trip for less than $100.00, so I telephoned Fred Schwant at White River and he hired Art Pelke to come after us the following day for $50.00. I will never forget that trip and the roads. We left Winner at 9:00 A. M., and did not arrive at White River until about 5:00 P. M. After we all arrived in White River, we learned that the real estate men had rented our farm until April 1 to Henry Seibert, so we could not move out on the farm until April and we could not find a vacant house in White River to move into.

Fred Schwant had bought a little house in White River so they would have a place to live in until the house they were building on their farm east of town was completed. They were kind enough to let us stay with them until their house was ready for them to move into. I believe we all lived in that little house together about two weeks—seven of us and four in their family. Seibert wanted to rent our farm for the coming year and paid good rent, so we continued to rent Fred's house the following year. We bought another team of horses and my husband worked on the roads and hauled water. Gerald and Gladys both found jobs, and I also worked at practical nursing and helped Dr. Schmitters at that time. There were three Doctors in White River, all busy, Dr. Schmitters, Dr. Bouza and Dr. Still. We got acquainted with so many wonderful people.

We moved out on the farm in April 1921. Mr. Holland had let us have 100 head of cattle on shares. We fed and took care of the cattle for one-half the calves, and we could milk all the cows we wanted to milk, so always had a cream check to pay for our groceries.

At the time we moved on the farm, Mr. McCauley had the Post Office and a little store over near the school, called Neville. Later it was moved to the Oscar Stevens farm north of the school and later when the mail route was changed, it was moved to the Delaney farm. Allie Perry carried the mail from White River to Rosebud three times a week, made a stop at Neville, picked up and delivered the mail. At that time Captain Gray lived where Louie Krogman now lives. Mrs. Gray taught the school West of the river. The Paul Hay family lived where Dick Schmidt now lives. The Elmo Hale family lived where Carl Johnsons now live. We had lots of good neighbors—Grays, Ozannes, Roy Henrys, Hays, Delaneys and Stevens and many good Indian neighbors. Many more moved in and later moved away.

Mary, Clara and Addie attended the Neville school one mile east of us. Their first teacher was Elizabeth Merchen, who later married Bill Wilder. Other teachers were Adele Schroeder, Hallie Funk, Olga McKennett, Mary Keever, Dale Bender and Russel Keller. They also held Sunday School at the Neville School at that time.

The first few years we had plenty of rain. The land was fertile and we raised wonderful crops of all kinds, gardens, alfalfa and grain.

On October 3, 1925, we lost our oldest daughter, Gladys, which was a sad experience to all of us. In

1929 the big depression started, then the drouth, the grasshoppers moved in and ate all of the vegetation. The dust storms started and sometimes the dust blew for days without stopping. It stripped the soil from the farms and buried fences, fields and people's hopes. Only a deep and definite love for the land could hold a family there at that time, and many of us had to stay. We did not have anything we could do anywhere else.

It was a life crammed with adventure, depression, drouth, grasshoppers, blizzards, prairie fires and rattlesnakes. One good thing, we always had plenty of good water, but many other people did not. We never did burn cow chips, as the Indians used to trade us wood for chickens, other meat, etc. One winter we did burn corn since it was so cheap and we had raised a good crop, but we wished that we had it for feed during the drouth. It took grit and determination to go through those days but the one who had the strength and will of mind to stay came through all right.

Mr. Harrison passed away on April 5, 1944. I came to California in 1955 and am living with my youngest daughter, Addie.

I have so many wonderful memories of South Dakota and the grand people there.

# A Homestead on the Indian Trail

**As Told By Tobias Herrmann to Winifred Reutter**

Johannes L. Herrmann and his wife Regina were real pioneers coming over from the Old Country to Butte, Nebr., in 1900. They moved to Freeman, S. D., in 1901, then to Dallas, S. D., in 1911.

They heard about the land offered for homesteaders in Mellette County. In September 1912, Mr. Herrmann went out there from Dallas with a locator, Chester Slaughter. The locator had told them that he knew of a piece of land that was available, if they wanted to buy a relinquishment. Later they found out that they were shown the wrong quarter of land. The one they were supposed to have looked at was located nearby but was not as level as the one the locator showed them. This type of error happened often in the homesteading days. Sometimes, of course, the locators were mistaken in figuring out exact locations on the open fenceless prairie and other times they were "forgotten on purpose," some of the old timers thought.

Grandma and Grandpa Herrmann

They drove out of Carter northwest on an old Indian trail. Thousands of Sioux Indians were camped at the Little Crow camp and they had seen very few cars, in fact there were very few cars out here for anyone to see in 1912. So when Chet Slaughter, Mr. Herrmann and his boys, Otto and Toby came chugging up the trail, the Indians all ran out of their houses and wigwams to look. They lined up for a half of a mile along the road to watch the strange machine go past.

On the return trip, the car, which had been heating and acting up on the way, quit when they were about on the Tripp County hill. Upon investigation they discovered it had run out of oil. They went to the home of Mr. Heat and bought some of the only oil he had on hand—separator oil! He charged them $2.00 a quart but they had to have it so bought enough to get home on.

In October Mr. Herrmann went to Chamberlain and filed on SE 27 41-25 and then they began to make plans for moving to Mellette County.

March 12, 1913, was a beautiful, warm spring day. Otto and his dad left Dallas, S. D., with two big wagon loads of lumber for their homestead. They got to Winner O. K. and the next day, March 13, 1913, they started on west when it began to get foggy and then started to snow. Otto made it back to Carter, walked to Winner and took the train back to Dallas. Mr. Herrmann eventually went on to the claim after the storm but it was two weeks before he made it back to Dallas.

In May 1913 the Herrmann family left Dallas. They had two loads of furniture and equipment, four horses, six cows and four dozen chickens. They camped near Tripp County hill for a while until their own home was built. Some of the lumber they had hauled previously to their homestead had "walked away" so they put up a smaller house than they had first planned.

For their first barn they turned the hayrack on its side and put hay over it for a shelter. And the upturned wagon box became their chicken coop. Later Mr. Herrmann built a sod chicken house, and in 1914, a large sod barn.

Toby remembers how mice would make holes in these sod buildings and also in the sod banked around the house. Later rattlesnakes would go into these holes for the mice and when real warm days came along the snakes would crawl out on the sod ledges. Sometimes it was tricky business gathering eggs in those sod buildings, you had to watch out for snakes in the nests.

What a hardy race the Mellette County pioneers were. His mother, like all the other women, washed clothes on the board when she had enough water to wash with. Water was a problem for all homesteaders but the Herrmanns really had it extremely rough in that respect. They (Mr. Herrmann, Otto and Toby) dug twelve wells by hand and all were dry holes. They had to drive their stock three miles to water. They hauled water from a well about four miles away. One day they were shocked to find a dead colt in the well. They had to get the colt out and clean the well before they could get more water. There were many times when a certain team would run away, spilling the barrels of precious water and sometimes running all the way home with the empty stoneboat.

April 9, 1913, Mr. Herrmann and sons went to Butte, Nebr., to get cattle and some seed corn. They got as far back as Naper when a snow storm hit and they had to go back to Mr. Herrmann's sister's place at Butte again. Toby took the train to Omaha and back to Dallas. A couple weeks later his dad and the stock finally drove through to Mellette County.

Johannes Herrmann broke 20 acres in 1913 with a walking plow. He planted it all to sod-corn, using a sharpened stick to make the holes and dropping the kernels in by hand. They raised enough corn to feed a few pigs and chickens, and to grind some in the coffee mill for corn meal. This was sifted and the coarse part fed to the chickens while the rest made delicious corn bread.

One Indian, Ghost Head, came regularly twice a week to buy bread from Mrs. Herrmann. He was a small man, less than five feet tall, and rode a spotted pony. He used a folded blanket for a saddle and a leather thong around the horse's jaw for a bridle as was the custom of all Indian riders those days. One week he didn't show up and Toby said he knew something had happened as Ghost Head never missed coming for his bread. Sure enough they heard later that their customer had passed away.

The Sioux Indians received rations and checks from the Government regularly at this time. So they camped near to the Issue Stations to be on hand at pay day. One Indian trail came from Carter which was to the southeast of Herrmann's homestead and joined the Bad Nation Indian trail. This main trail extended north and south from Bad Nation and points north to Butte Creek. Sidetrails went to Little Crow camp and also southwest to O'Kreek. The well worn ruts made by the many Indian wagons that traveled this old Indian trail may still be seen on the prairies after all these years.

There were thousands of Indians at these camp grounds. Tom Yellow Fox was said to be one of the Chiefs and he lived south of a large frame hall that was used for dancing. Bad Nation was north of Herrmann's and the Little Crow camp was south of there so their home was right in the line of travel on one of the trails. Toby can remember seeing the Indians passing by at any time of day. Also hearing them at any time of night. Sometimes bumping their wagons against the corners of the house if it was a dark night.

In the winter of 1913-14, during a blizzard one night, Mrs. Herrmann thought she heard a noise and said to Otto; "I think there is someone in the house." They lit a match to see, and there was an Indian, Jim Bear, setting at the cook stove with his feet in the oven, warming up and making himself right at home! They asked about his squaw and he said she was out in the wagon holding the team. Mr. Herrmann went out, tied the team and brought her in. Her hands were so stiff with the cold they had to be pried open to let go of the lines. Drinking hot coffee around the warm stove soon warmed the Indians up and the next morning they went on to their home on the creek.

It would be impossible to list the hundreds of Indian names but a few of the old timers in this neighborhood were Blue Horse, Johnnie Beauvois, Roan Eagle, White Hawk, Ghost Head, Yellow Fox, Black Horse, Ute, Little Crow, Medicine Eagle and Rattling Shield. Ben Medicine Eagle still lives there.

The second week of July 1914 Mr. Herrmann proved up on the Mellette County claim where he and Mrs. Herrmann spent the rest of their days. He went to Wood and appeared before F. C. Kirch who was the United States Land Commissioner at that time. His witnesses were Calvin Schaeffer and Jess Leneau.

The closest school in 1913 was on the George Dillon allotment and was known as the Schaeffer school. It was a log house. Etta Cash (Navin) was the first teacher. Toby had to ride about three miles, bareback to attend. Some of the other pupils were Arvid, Carl and Lucille Schaeffer and Lloyd Best.

Other neighbors in those early days were Emma Auerswald, Ed Dishaw, Roy Balliky, Pete Bleagle and Jess Leneau (who later went farther west to work on the U + ranch—U Cross Ranch—and was known as Jess Leonard).

**Leaving White River for service in WWI, left to right: Paul Emerick, Luther Schaeffer, and Otto Herrmann.**

Toby and Otto worked out during the summers and fall at odd jobs. Sometimes picking corn for three cents a bushel. Driving a team and wagon and unloading the corn made long hard days. But that was the common lot that was shared by all of the Homesteaders in those early days of hardships and happiness.

Toby lives just west of the old homestead, and Otto lives in Wood, so they can get together frequently and talk over those early Mellette County days.

## TWILIGHT IN DAKOTA

Turtledoves coo good night and curlews cry.
Frogs tune up for their midnight lullabye.
A jet contrails across the evening sky,
And a drake quacks caution to his duck nearby.
I turn, with weary steps, toward home and sigh,
Another day is gone, another night draws nigh.

—Winifred Reutter

# Homesteaders Near the Farley Store

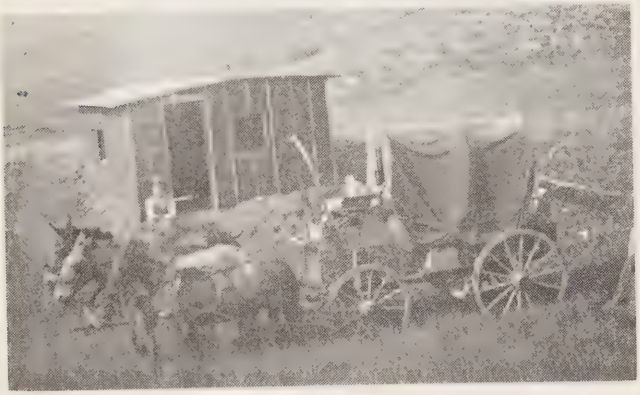
**By Ruby Rickards Hitchings**

Myres Rickards came out to homestead in Mellette in the spring of 1912. That fall Myres and my brother, Roy Lake, came to South Dakota.

They built a sod house on the claim in September of 1912.

"A cold wash day" — Rickards' soddy

We were married in 1914 and came by covered wagon to our Mellette County homestead, arriving at 4:00 P. M. on June 16, 1914.

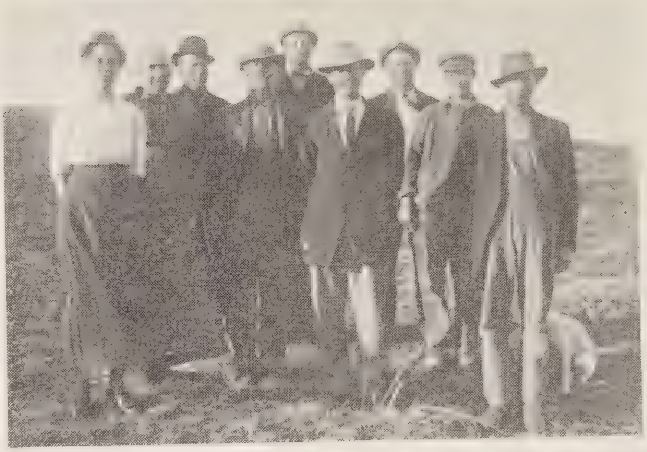


Arriving on claim, June 16, 1914. Myres on doorstep, Ruby took the picture.

Our home was located in the neighborhood of the Farley Post Office. We were south of Leslie Leeks' and north of Hans Petersen's. His brother Pete owned the Petersen land at that time.

We had seven children. Six are still living and all except one live in or within 40 miles of Shelton, Wash., where I make my home.

Many years later, I married for the second time to C. C. (Happy) Hitchings. After he passed away I came out here to be near my children. I had lived in Mellette County from 1914 to 1960 and often think of my many friends back there.



At Levi Leeks: Mr. and Mrs. Leek, Leslie Leek, Mr. and Mrs. Guy Geiman, Pete Petersen, Myres Rickards, John Erickson and H. Scannell.

I remember when I went to visit Grandma Ryan and often you (Winifred Reutter) would come to see her the same day. Another friend I lost was Mrs. Stromer at White River.

Mrs. Ryan, who Mrs. Hitchings mentioned visiting in 1952.

It took us seven days in 1914 to come across country in our covered wagon to our homestead. Times have changed and the same trip traveled by car would not take long now.

Homestead days are gone but not forgotten.

### PROMISE OF THE PASQUE

Bravely the Pasque flower pushes up
While others deep in snow are sleeping.
Awake, to foretell to the weary world
All is not greed, war and weeping!
Hidden beneath, fear-chilled today is Spring;
Have faith and hope, we're in God's keeping! (W. R.)

# Stories from the County Line

**By Lloyd E. Hole**

I first came to South Dakota as a harvest hand in 1921, arriving by way of train in Winner, S. D., on the evening of August 15. The next afternoon I was working on a threshing job at W. W. Lenker's east of Ideal, S. D. I worked in that vicinity till the threshing was completed, then worked on a haying crew putting up prairie hay. Then worked at putting in some fall grain in a corn field with a one horse drill.

The next job was picking corn for H. E. Covey, then State Senator from Hamill. I picked 3,400 bushels of corn for him, getting the job done on December 21. I then packed my suitcase and was able to arrive at my parents' home in Wellman, Iowa, in time for Christmas.

Covey had broke and planted corn on some 40 acres of sod. He had dumped some melon seeds in the planter box and a melon vine was apt to be anywhere on the half mile rows. The corn was soft so I fixed up the wagon box to hold sixty bushels and it would hold twelve bushels more when I set on a couple of side boards. I'd snap a 75 to 80 bushel load of corn in about three hours, bring it in, back up beside their house and scoop the load off through a basement window into the basement, where it in turn was shoveled into the furnace as needed for fuel. At this time, in the fall of 1921, corn was worth on the market from 25 to 27 cents per bushel. Coal at that time cost from $9.50 to $12.00 per ton according to quality. Since this sod corn I was picking for fuel was immature, it had very little if any market value.

Coveys lived 26 or 27 miles northeast of Winner. The cost of hauling coal out that distance was an item in itself. So Mr. Covey figured that if it took two bushels of good corn at 27 cents per bushel to produce as much heat as one bushel of coal at 55¢ per bushel, he was ahead by burning his poor corn and staying at home. Most hauling those days was done with a team and wagon so a trip from their place to Winner and back meant a two days jaunt.

Two years later, to the day, I was back in Winner, S. D., again. Within an hour I had jobs for a brother, a friend and myself in the same vicinity where I had worked before. First, the friend got homesick and left and then my brother did, but I stayed on. After threshing I helped hay, fall seeding and again picked corn. That time I picked corn nearly all winter, the biggest job being 120 acres that I picked out alone and completed that job in February.

In the meantime I decided I'd try farming here. So I leased a quarter section of Indian land, broke out 80 acres the first year and planted it to corn. From that 80 acres of sod corn I sold nearly 2,000 bushels of corn. I thought I had hit the jackpot! I leased more land, got more broncs to break for the work I got out of them, and in 1925 I listed in 170 acres of corn with a one-row lister. Prospects were good until three days of awful hot winds came just as the corn started to tassel. That year all I harvested was corn fodder.

I decided if I was ever going to get rich, I'd better get out of farming and into stock raising. So in March 1930 I moved to Mellette County, southwest of Wood onto the Mark Weed homestead. Lived there three years, then moved onto the Cordell homestead where I built a sod house.

I built my sod house in the summer of 1933. It probably was the only one ever built in this vicinity; I never heard of another anyway. To construct one is quite a task. First I selected a site that was well drained and protected by the natural lay of the land. It was on a south slope. With a four horse team, plow and fresno, I plowed and moved dirt until I had a floor space leveled off. The southeast corner was at ground level and the space was 28 x 32 foot. The northwest corner was cut into the hillside to a depth of five feet to make the floor level. Next I went looking for tight sod; that is, sod thickly interwoven with grass roots to hold it together. I tried three different places before I found suitable sod. I endeavored to plow the sod a uniform depth and width. The dimensions desired were six inches thick, or deep, and twelve inches wide. After several long furrows had been plowed, I came with the wagon gears on which I had laid 2 x 6s for a flat bed. With a straight nosed spade eight inches wide, we cut sod blocks two foot long. These sods we loaded onto the wagon, grass side down. One of these sod or bricks was far from being light in weight. A hundred made a pretty good load. These were hauled to the building site. As the grass side of each block was to be laid down, a layer of fine dirt was first worked into the grass that was already where the wall was to be built.

The first row of sods was laid lengthwise with the wall. Two sods were laid side by side, for a wall to be two feet thick. The next row was laid staggered, that is, the ends of the sods on one row met midway on the sods beside them on the next row (similar to brickwork in making a chimney). Fine dry dirt was worked into the seams or joints to seal them. The second layer was laid crosswise. This procedure bound one row or layer of sod to the other. Openings were left for a door and seven windows as it was to be a four room affair. I had made the door and window frames myself out of rough lumber that I planed down and the frames were set in place as the walls went up. I did not keep track of the number of sods used in the construction but at that time I did know the approximate number, but have forgotten it. I do know it was a lot of them as the gable ends were sods to the roof.

The roof was made by putting a 2 x 6 inch plate on the sod walls. 2 x 6's were used for rafters and 1 x 12 inch rough boards were used for sheathing. Then a cover of heavy tar paper or rubberoid roofing paper was put on and on top of that I threw a six inch layer of dirt. It was indeed warm in the winter, never froze in it, and it was cool in the summer. We were not there long enough to really complete it as I rented the Matousek place and moved onto it the first of November 1934.

We lived on the Fred Matousek place for about six years, then moved onto our own place that I had bought in 1937. In 1942 I dealt for a place between Winner and Colome so as to be near a high school.

For three years I farmed the two places that were 48 miles apart. It was a killing grind. I decided life was too short to continue such a grind. Crop losses each year of 1943 and 1944 by grasshoppers, black rust and an early freeze in Tripp County forced me to give up the place in that county. In March 1945 I moved back here to stay, coming alone; the family moved into Winner. And I have been here alone ever since.

The place that I own here and live on is in Todd County, against the Mellette-Todd County line. Up until the last few years I was, what one might say, astraddle the line fence as I rented land and also farmed in Mellette County.

The near neighbors that I had when I came to Mellette County in 1930 are all gone save one family, Ralph Harpers, who in 1943 moved his buildings out of Mellette County, south into Todd County and along the creek.

Over the years I came to know Fairview Township fairly well. In 1930 a few of the homesteaders still lived on their homesteads. They were Jim Orrs, J. P. Norup, J. H. "Doc" Moses and Lars Larsen. A good many more had moved away but still owned their homesteads which they have since sold. Among them were Frank and Jim Sykora, Bice, Cordell, Swanson, Miss Bamber, Little, Jim Carter and others. The only homesteader that is living today and still holds her homestead (but she doesn't live here) that I know of is Della Ward. She homesteaded in section 6 40-27. The Wm Hicks homestead on SE of section 33 40-27 is still in the family, being now held by his two sons.

There was a town in the township in the early days named Berkley. It went into early decay largely because Wood was only a few miles distant and the Indian Issue building was near there. The Berkley school house, a two room building, was later moved to the southeast corner of section 16 40-27 and became generally known as the Orr school thereafter. It still stands although no school has been held there since the term of 1934-35. It is used for township meetings and elections.

During the trying times of the Dirty Thirties several families moved away from this vicinity. Later, when times became better their places were purchased by some neighbor who stayed or someone who had come into the community, thus the farms and ranches began to increase in size until some units now include thousands of acres. There are three that can rightfully be called ranches now within the township.

I have one neighbor that so far I have not mentioned. He is Robert McLean and his wife Alvina. Robert is half Irish and half Indian. Mrs. McLean (Alvina) was a Gallineaux so has French blood in her veins. She was the only daughter of John Gallineaux. He and Isaac Little Bald Eagle were reputedly the tallest Indians on this reservation in their days, each being six foot and seven inches tall. Tales are told as facts that John was one very strong man. I have been told this by men who said they saw it done; John could go into a corral, rope a wild two year old broncho, standing flat footed would hand over hand drag the colt right up to him, and not once could the colt jerk him out of his tracks.

Mrs. Robert McLean's grandfather was half-Sioux, half-French. He could speak but very little English, yet he became a courier for the Army Post at Ft. Randall. After the Rosebud Reservation was established, when the Government was buying cattle and having the herds brought to the Reservation for distribution among the Indians. Her grandfather was sent from Ft. Randall to the Rosebud Agency with the money to pay for the cattle herds that were delivered to the Agency. There were times when he had on his person thousands of dollars in gold. When he made these trips on horseback he camped at night along the way and was never accompanied by but one companion, who didn't know Mr. Gallineaux's real mission.

An uncle of Mrs. McLean, Callesse Gallineaux, was for many, many years chief interpreter for the Rosebud Indians at the Federal Courts.

Mr. and Mrs. Bob McLean lived on the south half of section 34 40-27 when I came here in 1930. Then they were my nearest neighbors and over years they have remained my good neighbors.

Robert's father, James, came to the Rosebud country as a young cowboy. He joined up with a cattle drive of Texas cattle as they passed through Kansas near his home. They had been purchased by the United States Government for delivery to the Rosebud office at Rosebud, S. D. There the cattle were slaughtered and a quarter of beef was issued out to each Indian family. At that time all Indians had to assemble at Rosebud to be counted. The official work lasted for several days, so during these days the Indians feasted on free beef and danced their native dances.

For a time, young, big, husky Jim stood on the sidelines watching the dances. The cowboys had themselves a day when they arrived at the near railroad town of Valentine, Nebr. So when they came in with the cattle to Rosebud they had a few bottles of red eye cached in their boots or their bed rolls.

Jim imbibed enough so he got up courage to join in the dances as did some of the other cowboys. Jim fell for an Indian maid who seemed to like him for a partner. He asked who she was and was informed she was the Chieftain's daughter. So he asked who her father was and the Chief was pointed out to him.

Jim took another drink on that, squared up his shoulders and marched over to the Chief. Boldly and without any prelude, Jim asked for his daughter in marriage, through an interpreter. The chief told him to come back tomorrow. Jim was not to be put off. He was back the next evening and asked the same question again. The Chief said nothing for a long time. Finally he spoke, "For my daughter, I want a good cow horse with good saddle and bridle and lariat rope and 20 ponies."

Jim turned and walked away. He danced once more with the Indian maiden and called it an evening. The next morning his boss noticed something was wrong with Jim and he asked him what was bothering him. Jim told him. It was too good to keep. The drive boss called all his cow-hands together and he told them Jim's troubles.

Being young and rough and ready as they were, they decided to call the old Chief's bluff. Each one would give one pony of his private string to make up the 20 ponies and Jim was to lead the entire string behind his own top horse up to the front of the Chief's tepee and ask for the maiden. The boys, of course, all followed along behind to see to it that Jim didn't weaken before he arrived at the tepee and turn back. But Jim was resolute, he rode up before the tepee, dismounted and with all the grace of a true Irishman announced his arrival. He asked the Chief to come out and see that he was fulfilling the requested price for his daughter. The Chief came out, went carefully from one horse to another, saw that all were good sound stock, came back to his tepee and went inside. After a time he came back out leading his daughter by the hand. He took Jim's hand, placed his daughter's hand in Jim's hand, bowed his head and went back inside his wigwam.

Jim stood there, not knowing what to do next. Finally the interpreter explained that he now had a wife.

That wasn't Jim's way of doing things. He put the maiden on a horse, he mounted another, then they rode to Valentine where he hunted up a Justice of Peace and they got married legally, in white man's style.

Jim then settled on the Rosebud Reservation. In time he had quite a family and Jim prospered. During World War I he sold a car load of horses at a time to Army remount buyers. Robert is the second of three sons. Sam and Tom are now deceased. There were two daughters that I recall, Mary and Addie. I believe there was still another daughter but I am not sure. These mentioned I knew personally.

Addie married Dick Larvie. One of Dick's sisters was the wife of the great Sioux Chief Sitting Bull.

Jim McLean selected his ranch with care. His wife's allotment was on White Thunder Creek but Jim thought that a place on Butte Creek was better for him, so he succeeded in getting some allotments traded and secured the place where Robert lives today. The ranch remains the same size as it was in 1930, six quarters or 960 acres.

Another Indian family of note in the township was the Iron Shooters. When the Indians drew their allotments they grouped them as to families. The Iron Shooter family consisted of several children. I have been told that the family allotments stretched continuously for eight miles long and varied in width from a half mile on the southeast end to three miles wide in its widest place. Very little of that original large tract remains Indian land today. Out of it, from time to time, quarter sections have been sold on Indian land sales, as the original allotee's died and the heirs petitioned the land for sale.

Differing in settlement from Mellette County is Todd County. It was never opened for homesteading. Neither were two sections in each township set aside as school land in Todd County.

Any land held by a white man in Todd County now, was at one time, an Indian allotment. Such was the case of my place here. It was the allotment of an Indian who died when a plague of scarlet fever hit the reservation. Differing a bit from most places, there has never been a mortgage on this place since I've owned it.

A fall or two after buying this place I discovered that there was a rattlesnake den on it of considerable population. One fall the State Fish and Game Department offered prizes in a contest of rattlesnake extermination. We decided to enter the contest. Armed with a three foot chokecherry stick each, the Mrs. and I, sallied forth each nice day during that contest period to hunt snakes. During that two weeks we killed and took the rattles off 311 rattlesnakes. On our best day we killed 74, that varied from young ones born that summer and having one button, to one nearly five foot long with 15 rattles. Of the number we killed there was one diamond back and one green one. These two hides I put over belts and sold. In this contest we won second money. It helped to buy the Mrs. a new spring outfit.

The rattlesnake hunt took place in the fall of 1936. I had mowed hay on this particular quarter section in 1935, raking it with a dump rake and bunching it with the same rake to be hauled in and stacked later. It was while I was hauling the hay in that I noticed an unusual number of rattlesnakes to be present in a given area. At one time there had been a prairie dog town here, one that covered perhaps ten acres. 1936 being a dry year, the grass didn't grow very high where hay had been mowed the year before, and I was pasturing the land too.

The first day we hunted, we drove out in the car, the Mrs. driving while I set ready with rifle to shoot any snake we got near enough to. I shot six or seven and that was all. It is said that snakes can not hear. Whether they can or not, I won't argue, but something drove the snakes into hiding that day, and fast, too.

The day must be fairly warm and still, to have a good snake hunt, so the next nice afternoon we drove to the area again. I had the rifle along but didn't use it. When I saw a snake close by, as the Mrs. drove slowly along, I'd step out and with my three foot chokecherry stick, strike the snake a sharp blow just back of it's head. That usually broke its neck. Then I usually mashed its head with the heel of my shoe, while I cut off the rattle and then got back in the car. We'd move on unless as often happened, the Mrs. spotted one on her side of the car. Sometimes she did and I'd spot another on my side and was busy killing it, so she would get out with her stick and kill snakes, too.

It was the little fellows that one had to watch out for, hunting in the grass this way. The ones that were born that summer had only a button, no rattle. Those little fellows were as full of fight as the big ones were. In fact, I believe they were more so.

One day we were cruising slowly along, and the Mrs. stopped the car, saying she saw one just as it was crawling to the right in front of the front wheel, which would put it right under the car by the time she got stopped. Just as she stopped, I saw a big one laying about two rods away. I opened the door and stepped down without taking my eyes off the big snake. When my second foot hit the ground and I started to stand up, I felt something move under my left foot. I looked down. I was standing on a large rattlesnake! It had kinked itself up to avoid the passing wheel. Its head was out from under my foot, but all it was trying to do was get out from under. I had the small end of my stick sharpened, I jabbed the sharp end down through its neck to pin it down while I could use my heel to smash its head. Getting that done, I leaned over to cut off the rattle and there were three little ones standing on their tails striking at me. After I had collected their buttons, I then went over and killed the big one stretched out a couple rods away, then got back in the car. I'll admit I was just a bit shaky. There were just too many snakes, too close, all at once.

The third or fourth time we went hunting, we had gone only a short distance over the eastern edge of the old prairie dog town when I spotted a snake, or something that looked like one, crazily crawling through the grass. The Mrs. drove near. I got out with stick in hand. It was a snake and it was all red on both ends. I looked some more. It was holding both ends up a couple inches off the ground. I watched as it moved irregularly in my direction. When it got within about three feet of me, I finally figured it out. It was a snake one of us had "killed" the day before. The head and neck were about half-skinned where one of us had turned our heel on it, the other end was red from blood where we had cut off the rattle. I "killed" it a second time and then cut its head off. From then on we always cut off the heads as well as the rattles.

The day I found the bright green rattlesnake was one I'll always remember. The children were small and along with us. I had mashed that snakes head with my heel and left the rattles on it as I wanted to skin it. Then I had thrown the snake into the car trunk. Arriving back at the house after the hunt, the Mrs. drove up and stopped beside the porch. I got out followed by the three little tykes. They wanted to see the green snake and watch Daddy skin it. I opened up the lid. There was no snake in that trunk. I hastily looked around to see if it had crawled out as I raised the lid. No snake was around. When that information soaked in, it wasn't long before the Mrs. departed from the car! That snake was alive and somewhere inside that car body, but where? We hurried the kids inside and closed the screen door. Then the Mrs. and I began a REAL snake hunt! Finally I located it. It was up on the left side of the car body, by the car window, between the frame and the cloth upholstery. At a corner of the window was a little cut in the cloth and that snake had located it and was trying to push its nose through. As we watched, it succeeded. It was making a tear as it did so. I sent the Mrs. for a mouse trap. I set it and held it near the snake's head. It touched the trigger and got caught. I left the trap on until the snake ceased to move, then pulled the snake out and skinned it. It made a beautiful belt!

My forays on that rattlesnake colony, have, I believe, completely exterminated them. I saw and killed only one rattlesnake on my place this year, the first one in four years.

Another snake story might be of interest to some and probably unbelievable as well, but this is a true one. The spring after we made our snake hunts, I was fixing fence along the west side of the land. It was a warm spring day so I walked the short distance to the prairie dog town, to the hole that seemed to be the main den for the rattlesnakes. Back in the den hole I could see snakes, so I started digging. I soon got to where I could get the spade down behind some, and I pulled up, with a bunch of dirt, a knot or ball of snakes. They were twisted and wound around one another in a genuine snake knot.

They weren't very active yet (still partly dormant from their winter's sleep), so I pulled them apart. There were several kinds of snakes in that one ball, including rattlesnakes, bull snakes, garter snakes, one spotted snake and one small sand adder.

I had always heard that rattlesnakes and bull snakes were enemies, but these had evidently denned together, so make of it what you wish!

I have watched, to the end, a fight between a rattlesnake and a bull snake. The bull snake squeezed the life out of the rattlesnake before it died from the venom inflicted by the rattlesnake's bites.

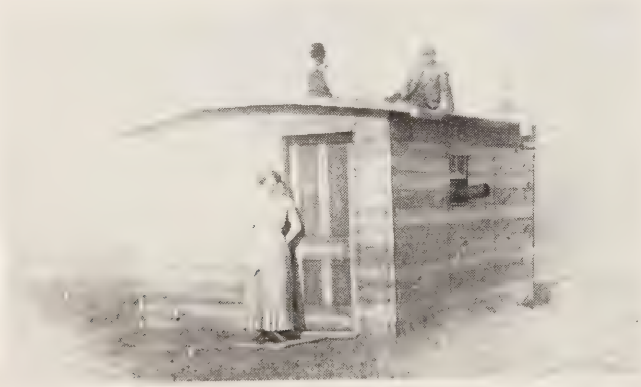
# Homestead Houses

**By Buena Barclay**

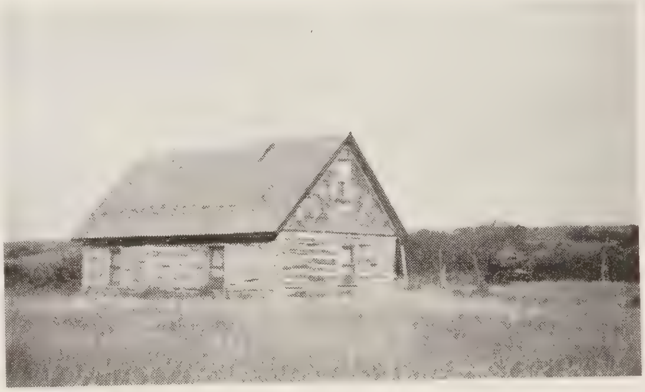
The homesteaders built many types of houses. The most common was the car-roof shack. The roof was rounded like that of a railroad car and covered with rubberoid roofing. Tar paper usually put on the outside walls was held securely by lath battens which kept out the wind, snow and rain from these little frame buildings.

Another type, where there was a shortage of lumber, was called dug-out. This was a sort of a cave dug into the side of a hill with the roof and front made of lumber. Sometimes the part of the sides above the ground level were made of lumber and sometimes of sod.

Then came the well known homesteaders frame shack with a gable roof. Usually these were unfinished on the inside, at least for the first few years. Some put in a ceiling so they would have an attic or an extra bed room for the children.



**Howlett Homestead Shack, Car-Roof Type**



**Charlie Bordeaux log house, one of the oldest log-houses in Mellette County that is still standing. (Picture by Winifred Reutter)**

Homesteaders seldom made log houses unless they had timber available. However the Indians, who had first choice of the land and had often picked their allotments with creeks on them, were able to build log houses. In the very early years many homesteaders built sod houses. The material was cheap and easy to get if one was willing to work. Some even had plastered walls and wood floors but most of them had dirt floors. These buildings did not last very long. But usually by that time, the homesteader had decided to prove up and sell out or was ready to build a better house.

There were quite a few adobe houses and these could be quite warm and comfortable and lasted better than the soddies. Adobe was made two ways and used much like cement. Some made a mud and straw mixture and shaped it like concrete blocks. When these had set solid they could be used to erect a building.

The Tuggle house near the Badlands was this type. It had oak floors, plastered walls and even an upstairs room.

The Pastian house, in the Texsam vicinity, was a poured adobe. They built wood forms and poured the mud and straw mixture into them, much like cement is poured into foundation forms today. The walls were quite thick, so the house was warm in winter and cool in summer. Their house had earthen floors at first but were packed so hard it was almost like cement. Mrs. Pastian kept many hand made rugs on the floor and later they put in wood floors. The walls were white washed with white clay from the Badlands which was put on with a swirl design made by her own hands. The house was quite large and represented a great deal of labor.

Later frame houses were built of several rooms. Some were new structures. Many were made of several homestead shacks which were moved and joined together to make comfortable homes.

**Howletts' house, made by moving several shacks together (August 1919).**

(All through this book you will see pictures of the various kinds of houses mentioned in this article. W.R.)

# The Howlett Homestead Story

**By Mrs. A. C. Howlett**

I have been asked to write a story about our homestead days. This is it. So many people have asked me, how did you happen to go to South Dakota to homestead?

My Father was a Civil War Veteran and therefore was entitled to a preference at the drawing when they opened Mellette County to homesteaders. He drew a fairly low number and friends urged him to homestead on it. But, because his health was poor, he gave my husband, A. C. Howlett, his relinquishment.

A. C. came out and looked at the land and thought it was worth living on, at least for 14 months, so he filed on it. Some old friends located it for him. It was about 10 miles northwest of White River in a community later known as Texsam.

He hired help to build a one room shack to hold the land for us while we prepared to move onto it.

A. C. came back to Missouri and sold our newspaper, The Atlanta Express, then returned to South Dakota to get a job and find a place for us to live. The children and I followed in the spring as soon as school was out. We landed in Winner, S. D., Margie's birthday, June 28, 1913. A. C. was working at the Tripp County Journal office and Buena went to work there also.

It took a long distance by team and wagon to our homestead from Winner. The trip took us two days, to make the seventy to eighty miles.

We were accompanied by another homesteader, Charles Bates, and his friend, who were from New York City. They had a light wagon and team. They asked A. C., our son, Art, and me to ride along.

People who never were in South Dakota in the early days cannot imagine what it was like. No graded roads, only trails that went along the easiest route. Crossing streams where they could be forded and going up the hills where they were less steep. We forded the Little White River close to the old Indian Day School where Frank Perry's father taught. There was a foot-bridge built near the ford that had been built by Mr. Perry and the Indians so the Indian children could come to school. It was a swinging bridge, suspended on wires that were tied to trees on either side of the river.

After fording the river we passed the Standing Elk house, Doctor Pughs, Miss Wrights, Beals, Jensens and Searles. Then there were no more houses along the trail until we came to our own little 11 x 12 shack, sitting all alone without another house in sight on the prairie.

One of the men had killed a jackrabbit and he gave it to me saying, "We will be over to help eat it tomorrow." I said, "Oh no, I can't cook a decent meal on that little laundry stove. Anyway, there isn't even a place yet, to put the stove pipe out."

But they solved that problem by taking out a pane of glass in one window and sticking the stove pipe through the hole. (See picture on preceding page.)

A. C. told the men to come to dinner as I would be a good sport and cook the rabbit. They came and helped A. C. tack rubberoid roofing on the roof where it had blown away. And they had dinner with us. We used wooden packing boxes for chairs and a large box turned over a barrel for the table. (The barrel was one which I had packed with home canned fruit from Missouri.)

We stayed about a week in the shack at this time with our makeshift furniture, it seemed like a sort of a continued picnic. We bought milk and carried drinking water from my nearest neighbor. They were Mr. and Mrs. Nick Witherow and lived just over the hill about a half mile north of us. They were the old friends who urged us to come homestead and they had already been living on their homestead for a year or so. They with their children, Bessie and Edgar, lived in a one room house with an attic. Somehow they managed to spare wall space enough for a box with pigeon holes in it to put mail in. And that was the beginning of the Texsam Post Office. Later, when Witherows went on a visit the Post Office was moved to the Shouldis home.

There were lots of bachelor homesteaders in those days and they would come to get their mail also hoping for a meal cooked by a woman. Then they begged to buy bread, and Mrs. Nick, as she was called, would let them have a loaf or two. At first they had no oven at home so she and Bessie would carry the bread dough, after it was in the pans, over a mile to the old T L cookshack which was up north by the T L dam. In it was a wood burning cook stove with an oven. They picked up scraps and pieces of the old corrals, and even cow chips, for fuel to bake their bread.

I had better tell about the T L ranch. T. L. was an old well-known cattle brand used by a cattle company who had fenced in, at one time, hundreds of acres. It was land that had once belonged to the Government or Indians but they could no longer lease it as a unit because the Government land was now open to homesteading.

So the cattle company sold their cattle and not many of the old time cowboys were left. One night, one of them came to our place. He had rounded up a few horses on the range and was driving them to market. He asked permission to stay at our place overnight; however, he did not care to stay in the house but preferred to spread his bed-roll and sleep under the stars as he was accustomed to.

Living out on the prairie with not another house in sight was rather scary at first, for a woman who had been used to living in town.

One day I got a big scare. I saw some Indians on horseback coming along the trail toward our shack. I noticed they had large revolvers in their holsters and lots of cartridges in their wide gun belts. They got off their horses, came up to the door and knocked. I debated whether to go to the door or not. Then I remembered a revolver, that was kept above the door to have handy to kill rattlesnakes, so I got it down and then opened the door just a crack.

I was so surprised when the Indian men asked me very politely, and in English, for a drink of water. I told them they would find a drinking cup at the well and that the water was good. Then they asked if they could water their horses and I said they could and would find a tub beside the well. They thanked me kindly, got their drinks and went on their way.

Later, Mrs. Witherow came to see if they had frightened me, as she knew I wasn't used to seeing Indians. She said they were Indian Police and that was why they were all armed.

Now I have many Indian friends and my early fears are all gone.

**At the door of bank (burned in 1924); print shop was in back. Left to right: Ernest Hamilton, A. C. Howlett, Edgar Witherow, and Ira Barclay (Little boy, unknown).**

A. C. decided to buy the Mellette County News, where he had been working to make a living while the children and I held down the claim. Then during the Christmas vacation we moved to White River and went out to the homestead on week-ends.

As we needed more room, A. C. bought a 12 x 20 homestead shack from J. B. Grant who had proved up. We planned to move it down to our claim and add it to ours.

Buena's boy friend, Ira Barclay, had come from Missouri to buy a relinquishment. They had decided to get married. Since Ira was a carpenter they agreed to do the work on the homestead shacks. Before the large shack was ready to move a blizzard came up. Ira and Buena were caught in that little house with a small laundry stove as the only means of heat. The snow blew through the cracks and covered their bed about three inches deep. Luckily, they had a large room sized rug that they used to cover their bed and could lift it up and roll the snow off at the end of the bed.

The blizzard lasted two days and two nights. They had enough wood to cook a little but stayed in bed most of the time to keep warm. They were sure glad to see the Witherows who came, after the storm, to see how the "tenderfeet" had fared in their first Mellette County blizzard.

Eventually the shack was moved and rebuilt making a comfortable three room house. That summer my father died and I went back to Missouri to help my mother.

That summer, a well was dug for the stock, some ground plowed and fences built. We also built a small barn for our driving and riding horse, Old Joe, and our one cow, Cherry.

Cherry was a real character. She would kick like a horse, backward, or like a cow, forward. She usually stood very well for a woman milker, but would kick a man every chance she got. One day Margie was milking her when Cherry decided to be skittish. Margie was afraid of her. Just then Iles Huey came by and offered to milk. Well, Cherry kicked him over twice before he could get started and Margie finally had to milk the cow herself.

I brought my mother, Mrs. B. J. Hemstreet, back to make her home with me and she bought a relinquishment, about two and one half miles north of us. We bought a shack west at the edge of the Badlands and moved it to her homestead.

Now we settled down to homestead in earnest. Mother, Art and I stayed at our homestead while A. C. and Margie worked in White River. I would go after them Saturday afternoon and take them back Monday morning. On week-ends either Margie or Art would take Mother to her homestead to spend the night. That, establishing residence, plowing a certain number of acres and planting it was all that was required to homestead. It was well known you could not make a living entirely on a homestead without some outside means of making money. Unless of course, you owned a herd of cattle.

Buena and Ira bought a relinquishment a mile west of us. They bought a good homestead shack and moved it to their land.

Ira had bought a team of black horses, A. C. bought a team of dapple greys, together they formed a four horse team with which Ira did the farming for all of us. Margie, little Arthur and I helped all we could.

That team of greys would run away every chance they got. The first time, Ira and Frank Brickner were going to town on the running gears of the wagon, when the box they were sitting on broke and spilled Ira and Frank off. That scared the team and they ran down Cottonwood Hill, crossed the bridge and started up the hill on the other side. In some way on the steep hillside they started rolling over and over to the sloughs at the bottom, where the wagon landed right side up, The horses were on their backs, with their feet in the air. It took quite a while to get them untangled, unhitched and on their feet. They were so covered with mud they no longer looked white and A. C. didn't recognize them when they got to town.

The next time they ran away was when they were moving Mother's shack from the Badlands to her homestead. They wore everyone out trying to catch them.

Moving A Homestead Shack

Another time, Margie had returned some borrowed machinery and was coming back home. She was riding one horse and leading the other. Both horses had harnesses on and they were dragging the doubletrees, which bumped against one horse's heels and away they started to run. Some way the harness pulled Margie off the horse. When she fell she landed on some rocks. When the horses came home without her we started looking for her and Ira and I found her still unconscious. Not long after that, Margie discovered she could not see out of one eye. The eye specialist in Omaha, Nebr., said it was probably caused from a blood clot on the retina as a result of the accident.

The last time they ran away, for us, was with me. I was coming home from town alone, when the strap holding the neck yoke broke letting the tongue of the buggy down. The horses started to run and the buggy turned over, throwing me out. I was injured very badly. One of the Jensen boys and his sister found me and took me home. I was in bed for a long time with my injured back. Then Doctor Leanard, a lady chiropractor from Winner, came, gave me adjustments which put me back on my feet.

Not long after this we sold the team and that fall they won the wagon race at Frontier Days for their new owner. That was probably the only time anybody was ever glad that they ran away.

One time during the homestead days we had a three day blizzard. There was so much snow that it covered the fences and made the whole country look different. When it finally quit snowing we could hardly tell where our barn was. It had frame sides and a hay roof. The hay roof was native and slough grass covering a framework of poles and tree branches. So much snow had blown into the barn that the saddle horse was standing on a snow drift and had eaten a hole in the roof. Art climbed down through that hole. He pitched hay to the horses and cows, carried water from the house to give each animal a drink before help came to shovel the snow away from the doorway.

Runaway team (in story) wins race at Frontier Days

Most wells were dug in the sloughs or draws in those days and after big snow storms like this, it was not uncommon to have two or three feet of water over the well when the snow melted and ran down the creek.

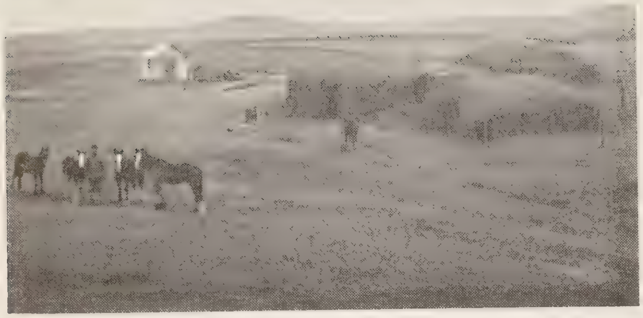
We were a little late in starting to homestead as we came in 1915. So some schools were already established. There was one a mile north of us and one about three miles west. Later the one north was moved about two miles west. Art attended school at all of these school houses at different times. Often the teacher would board at our house and they would drive to school. Olga McKennett was one of the teachers that boarded at our house. Bessie Gapen also taught one of our schools.

They also held Sunday school at the school house north of us and sometimes in the Shouldis home. As often as possible, Rev. Van Valkenburgh would come to preach. He was a Congregational preacher who was homesteading over west of White River. He drove a team of black ponies and made the rounds of country Sunday Schools as often as he could. He also preached regularly in a church in White River.

Our homestead house could be seen from the main trail, called the Texsam trail. This trail was between the Badlands and the Big White River northwest, to Cottonwood Creek to the south. So many travelers stopped at our house to spend the night on their journey past. They were always welcome and often repaid our hospitality by bringing out supplies for us on their return trip.

Since kerosene was our oil for cooking as well as for our lamps, we never missed a chance to send our kerosene cans along to be filled. One time I had emptied some kerosene into a pail and had it sitting on a box by the kitchen door. A neighbor, Iles Huey, came over and thinking it was a pail of fresh water, took a big swallow before anyone could stop him.

Another time, someone knocked on the door in the middle of the night. It was raining and a young boy stood there, he was soaked and shaking with the cold. He had walked almost all the way from McCrorey's store to our house without seeing anybody. He was on his



Iles Huey Homestead Near Texsam

way from Stamford to Gregory and we often wondered later what became of him.

Frontier Days was the big attraction in the early days. They had bleacher seats, judge stand, race track, also cattle and horse corrals. They had broncho riding, bulldogging, calf roping, wild steer riding, wagon races, relay races and Indian dances. Sometimes they would have a mock stage hold-up or other traditional events. There was usually a mock sunrise attack on the town by the Indians that really thrilled the visitors and got everybody in the mood for a celebration.

One year they held a sham battle, in which the Indians supposedly captured a white man known as Colonel Doyle. He had been a friend of the Indians for many years so he consented to be "Captured and Scalped" in front of the grandstand. They used catsup for bloodstains and it looked pretty real to the audience. Then the cowboys "bravely" drove the Indians away and two girls, Margie and friend, a Brodball girl, both dressed as Red Cross nurses, came out and pretended to bandage Doyle. And the cowboys took him away.

There were two major prairie fires close to us during our early homestead days. The first one started southwest of us, across Cottonwood Creek and burned east to the river.

The next one started west of us, three or four miles and at first burned west to the Badlands. The wind changed and it burned along the north side of the Cottonwood Creek almost to the Big White River. Then the wind changed again and the fire burned from the river back northwest until it had burned a complete circle around our homestead. The men in the community were at a farm sale north of the Big White River and had to come around the long way home because they could not ford the river. Women and children fought the fire and kept it away from their buildings. Almost everyone lost all their haystacks and there was no grazing until late spring on the burned over area. The neighbors and I made back fires around our buildings or all would have burned. Luckily, we had stacked our hay near the barn so it was saved.

Everyone has rattlesnake stories and we have our share. I have taken the bridle off my horse to kill them. Once Mother found a rattler on her doorstep. It crawled underneath while she was hunting something to kill it with, but Art pried up the step and killed it.

In 1917 we decided to prove up and move to White River. At this time A. C. was clerk of courts for two terms. Margie worked in the Post Office for Mr. Dendy and then at the courthouse for Mr. Kerlin as deputy auditor.

In 1918 we moved back to the homestead and A. C. taught school and served as county commissioner for two terms.

In the fall of 1918 the influenza was bad and there were many deaths. Among them were three young people who had gone to school to A. C. Their names were Edgar Witherow, Leodine Pastain and Homer Shouldis.

In October 1918 our daughter Margie was married to George B. Jerred of Gregory, S. D. He had bought the Sam Texter homestead relinquishment.

Sam had built himself a good five room house, expecting to bring his bride out from the East. But she decided homesteading was too rugged, so Sam gave up. Everyone was sorry to lose him from the neighborhood because he was a live wire. It was for him our Post Office was named Texsam. Also the trail through there was called the Texsam trail.

Margie and George lived on this homestead until depression and sickness in the family forced them to move near Gregory where they took care of his parents until they passed away. In 1945 they moved to Gering, Nebr., and there on January 24, 1949, George was burned in a gasoline explosion which resulted in his death the next day.

On May 13, 1954, Margie was married to William DeRock. This happiness was short for Bill died of a heart attack in Rapid City, June 6, 1954, while they were on their honeymoon.

Margie still lives in Gering. Her children, George, Jr., Lenora, Ronald, and Verl, are all married and live near her, while Lyle and his family live at Wasta, S. D. Her daughter, Mary, died March 4, 1944, leaving her three children in Margie's care. They are now the children of Perry and Esther Hitchings. We are so glad that Jerry, Judy and Janet have such good parents.

In 1927 we moved back to White River and A. C. was hired as custodian of the school building, a job he held for 14 years.

After Art finished high school he worked for C. E. Kell in his abstract office and also wrote insurance on his own. On June 6, 1933, he was united in marriage to Hazel Elley. Art and Hazel now live in Lincoln, Nebr., and Art is still in the insurance business. They have three children, Darlene, Ray and John.

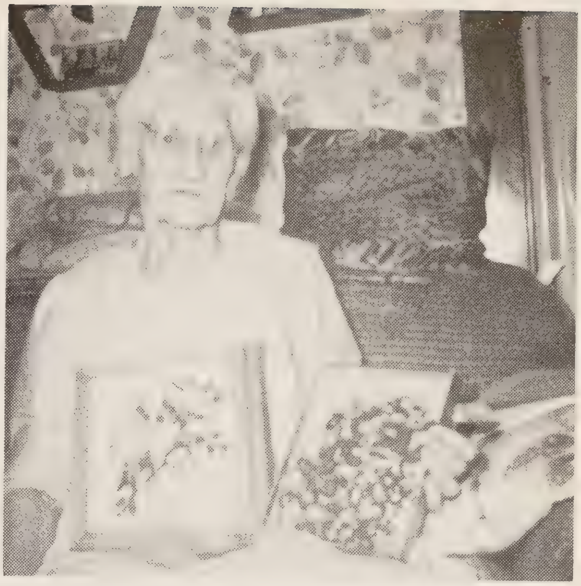
In 1944-45 A. C. was asked to teach school again, so at the age of 73 he went back to teaching again. He taught at the Lindquist-Green school. The next year he taught at a school near Mosher.

A. C. Howlett teaching the Lindquist School

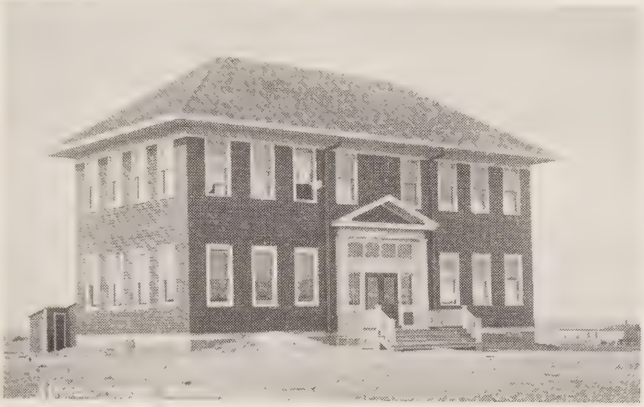
On August 14, 1949, I fell and broke my hip. Next day was my 74th birthday and on that day I was flown from Winner to Lincoln, Nebr. There my broken hip was successfully pinned. We were returning to White River in November and stopped overnight at the home of our granddaughter, Mrs. Lucy Barclay Miller, near Winner. While we were there A. C. suffered a heart attack, which was fatal before the doctor could reach him.

I have lived alone since that time. I keep active and have many flowers, both real and artificial. My flower garden is a pretty place in this arid land. I also weave rag rugs on a hand loom, make crocheted articles and enjoy making something both beautiful and useful out of things that ordinarily would be thrown away. I think I am the only person in the state who makes flowers out of human hair.

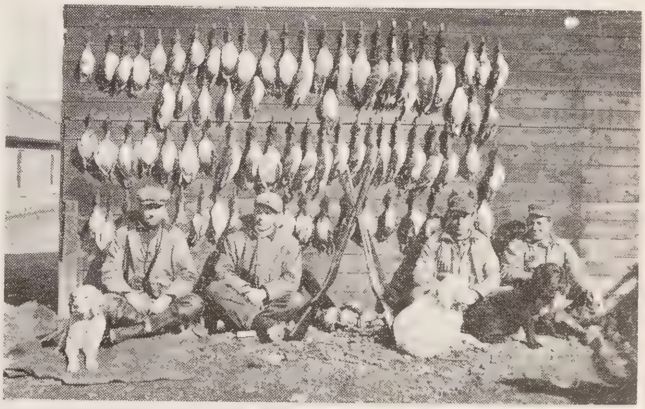
I was 86 years young on August 15, 1961. I have three children, ten living grandchildren, twenty great grandchildren and three great great grandchildren. I hope to live to be a hundred.



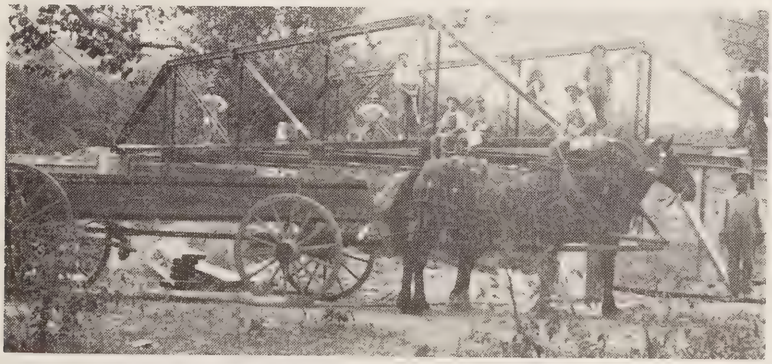
**Mrs. A. C. Howlett of White River, with her rare and unusual hobby — making flowers of human hair. Bouquet in frame, made by her mother, is over 100 years old.**



**White River Schoolhouse, 1913**

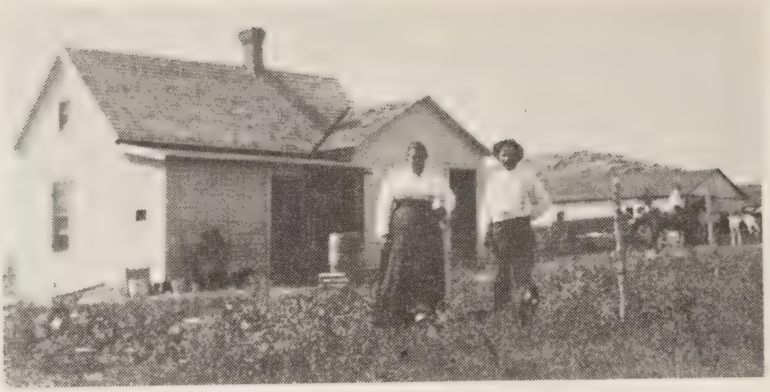


**Homesteaders and Wild Ducks**

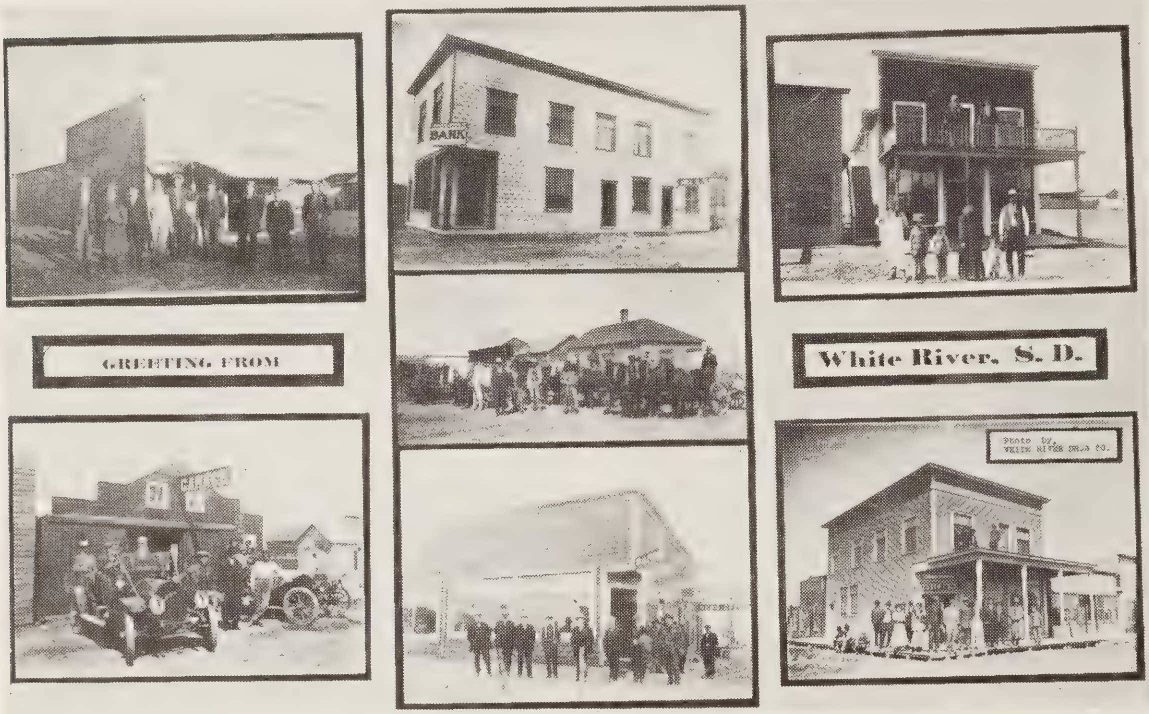


**Building First Big Bridge Over Little White River**

Iles Huey



A Homestead Near Texsam Post Office



GREETING FROM
White River, S. D.
BANK

Early White River Scenes. Howlett's print shop is in back of bank in center lower picture.

X marks A. C. Howlett who umpired this game. Two Hights, DeMarsche, Harry Marshall, Butrix Olson, and others played.

"Col." Jack Doyle "losing his scalp" at Frontier Days

Homesteaders hauling water from Little White River.

# Memories of the Neville Neighborhood

**By Mrs. J. Ben Huber**

You know me as Mary Huber, but I was born Mary Sharon, near Dante, S. D., in Charles Mix County. My father was Ray Sharon and my mother was Stella Nelson Sharon. My father died two months before I was born, from complications following pneumonia. He was only 19 and Mother was only a girl of 16.

My father named me before his death. He often said, "If it's a boy I don't care what you name it, but if it is a girl name her Mary, after your mother." A lovely tribute to a mother-in-law. I shall always remember the many times she told the story to me, and how special it made me feel to have her name. Maybe she spoiled me some, but she was always someone very special to me, too.

Wedding picture, Mr. and Mrs. Ray Sharon, Armour, S. D., 1912

I was born one day before my mother's seventeenth birthday. When I was two and a half years old my mother married Jake Schmidt. They had three children: Richard (Dick) Schmidt, Theodore (Ted) Schmidt and Berneice (Tootie) who is now Mrs. Robert Perry. All live near White River.

In the spring of 1925 our home burned to the ground. It left us with only our night clothes. . .and a clock and a lamp, which in the excitement, my step-father had carried out with him. Our very lives were spared because the smoke had made Tootie cough so much she had awakened my mother.

In the early fall my Step-father came west, to Mellette County, in search of a new home for his family. He found a place which he rented from J. W. Carter, located south of Wood in Fairview Township.

After renting the place he returned for us and by October we were ready to start. We loaded a hayrack with what few personal belongings we had. My mother and a cousin, Barney Rulo, took turns driving our old Model T Ford, with the children as passengers. My aunt and another cousin, Clifford Rulo, had decided to move west with us, so they drove one team and hayrack and my step-father the other. If I remember right, we had a milk cow tied to one of the wagons. At night we camped in the tent. The only camping site that still stands out in my memory was at old Witten—just east and north of where the old bank vault now stands. (Witten town now is farther south, moved when the railroad came in. W. R.)

I remember another incident on the trip out, that happened before we got to Winner. It was getting cold and snowing a little so we decided to go south of Winner to my Uncle Clyde Kelly's place before continuing on. Well, when we got there it seemed that several others had the same idea.

Their two married daughters and their families were there. My uncle and aunt had several small children of their own at home yet. I can still remember that in all, there were 23 of us together there at that time.

We had to sleep on the floor, or four or more of us children in one bed. If you happen to raise up in bed it was quite a problem to get back into your portion of the bed again. It wasn't so funny then, as it is now when I remember it. Anyway, we stayed about ten days.

During our stay there, the folks went along to Winner one day and into the famous "Outlaw Store" owned by Ben Butts. They were surprised to find so complete a store all under one roof so far "out West."

When the weather and roads were better we started on the last lap of our journey and arrived in the fore part of November at our new home in Mellette County. The first thing we learned was that the rent money had been lost, as the bank it was in had gone broke.

**Mary Sharon at about two years; now Mrs. Ben Huber of Dixon, S. D.**

Somehow the landlord and my step-father got together and made a deal so we were able to stay.

We children attended the Orr school. It was near enough for us to walk home for our lunch at noon. I believe anyone who had a long ways to walk, or had to be taken in a buggy with a team of very frisky mules, to get to school can realize how much that meant, especially in cold weather.

In March 1931 I married J. Ben Huber. At the time he was batching on his father's farm, located southeast of White River. This was in Pure Water Township near the old Neville Post Office and store.

Fred Huber (Ben's Father) moved to Mellette County, with his family, in 1914, when Ben was six years old. He built a nice home for his family, hauling the lumber from Carter with a team and wagon. Later he ran a livery barn in White River.

However, we only lived there about three weeks. Ben and I went to a neighborhood dance and when we returned, we found our house had been completely destroyed by fire. So for the second time I found myself without any possessions except the clothes I was wearing. We stayed with my folks a short time and then moved into a vacant house close by so we could do the chores at the home place. That fall we bought a one-room shack which we moved onto a quarter that belonged to Ben's father. It was in Section 1 40-29.

Here our oldest daughter, Loretta, was born. She is now Mrs. Ted Frederick. They have two sons Ronnie and Teddy. They had a sale April 11, 1961, and moved from their ranch north of White River to Neosho, Mo.

After Loretta was born there were hard times during the Thirties. We had both drouth and depression. In the fall of 1933 we decided to leave. We were gone eight years, living in Mosher, Winner and Iona at different times.

Our second daughter, Elaine, was born while we were living in Winner. She is now Mrs. Jerry Johnson and has a small son. They live in Valentine, Nebr.

Our plans were always, someday to return to our farm. With that in mind, we managed to hang onto the quarter with our shack on it. Then we bought one more from the county. The down payment was $65.00. I remember we had to borrow a few dollars to make the full amount.

In the fall of 1941 we moved back to Mellette County. We built onto our house and added other buildings and land to what we had already had.

Years of hard work followed but they were also happy years. Here in the spring of 1947 our son, Larry, was born.

In June of 1959 we sold our farm to Lonnie Valburg. On August 20th we had a farm sale and moved to Dixon where we are living at the present time. (March 1961.)

I was granted the privilege of living near my mother during her twilight years and on August 8, 1958, we laid her to rest in the White River Cemetery.

Although I am no longer a resident of Mellette County, a part of my heart will always be there.

# Bert Humphrey

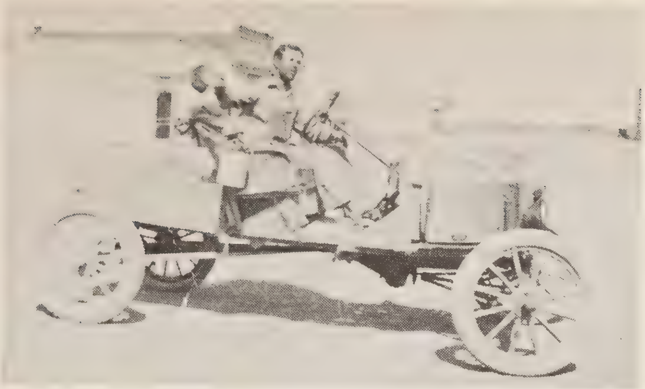
By Louise Humphrey

Bert Humphrey was reared along with his younger sister and older brother, Bill, on a well built-up farm near Wymore, Nebr. At an early age, he and his brother, both being fascinated by the railroad, went to Chicago and by Bert who was the younger, stretching his age a bit, and giving their nationality as Irish, they managed to get taken on as brakemen. Both later became conductors on two lines, and accumulated considerable seniority.

Bert, who was eager to acquire land, came to Mellette County when it was opened up for settlement. He homesteaded north of Wood and operated a freight line between there and Winner, using five wagons when the freight was heavy. When traveling at night, he hung a lantern on the wagon, set the horses on the trail and often walked much of the way to avoid part of the long jolting ride. A hundred round trips were made in a year.

From 1914-1922 he delivered mail between White River and Carter. Carter was then a thriving town, which boasted, by general consensus, the best hotel this side of Omaha. Bert kept a change of clothing at this Hotel, operated by Mr. and Mrs. Stone, as he often came in completely soaked and muddy after a hard trip.

Later he was driving a Model T Ford. The first thing he did with a new car was to have it "stripped down"; fenders were removed, doors and, in fact, everything not absolutely necessary to its operation. To protect his passengers on muddy days and from the cold, Bert would put a "Tarp" around them and pin it at the neck with a huge safety (horseblanket) pin. Of course their heads were upon occasion almost completely plastered with mud. On one trip he came upon a raging prairie fire and was instrumental in saving a homesteader who had became trapped by the flames. The fearful prairie fires and blinding blizzards were the greatest hazards then and still are, even though we are no longer in a frontier country.



**Bert Humphrey (with his stripped-down Model T, that always got through) on his last trip on the Winner - White River mail route.**

The homesteaders did not lead a dull life. They got together often, riding horseback many miles to dances (and if a piano were there Bert could chord to any tune the fiddler could play). They also attended baseball games, picnics, etc.

Homestead shacks were never locked and every one was welcome to enter to eat or sleep whether the owner was present or absent. Once Bert was urged to eat breakfast with a homesteader who causually served coffee and four pancakes, the size of a silver dollar. Bert realizing this was the end of his groceries, hesitated to eat but rather than hurt his feelings, joined him and then rode away knowing that such was the custom of the homesteaders, everything was freely shared be it little or much.

Leaving Wood, Bert built what is now the Gene Strain Ranch north of White River. He purchased his permanent ranch in 1918 from John Bordeaux, who lived the balance of his life on a quarter that Bert rented from him. Helen and John were as good neighbors as one could wish for, a familiar sight, going to town each day with their team and wagon.

Bert brought the first registered Hereford cattle into Mellette County. He strove to improve his own herd through the years. He and Chris Anders were founders of the Rosebud Hereford Association.

Bert and his wife Louise built a new ranch home about one-half mile north of town just before the bad times in the Thirties, but managed to survive along with the others. They saw registered cows sell for twenty dollars a head and saw them get back on good solid basis. Bert carried mail between White River and Murdo, also White River and Mission.

One year he tried some intensive farming on a flat 3 miles east of the ranch, one year he raised ten thousand bushels of corn, and the next year an excellent wheat crop, which was windrowed and lost because, of all things, continued rainy weather. After several discouraging years Bert gave up this project, never to farm again.

In the Thirties it was necessary to move the herd 70 miles southwest of the home ranch so they could be maintained. Bert and Louise checked the cattle every Sunday. For five weeks there were 17 head missing and they could not be located. One evening, several weeks later Bert and Louise delivered six miles southwest of town a blade that Bert had borrowed to move sand which had drifted around the barn. (The milk cow and the horses were literally sliding into the barn from

**Governor Gubbrud signing House Bill 605: Construction of new highway between Winner and Platte. Louise Humphrey of White River, and Frank McKenzie of Winner, co-sponsors of the bill, look on. Louise has the distinction of being the first woman representative elected from Mellette County. She has served the 42nd District, two terms.**

the sand mounds in front of the doors.) On the way back they saw a cow come over a hill, Bert said to his wife, "Do you know whose cow that is?" Sure enough, there were those 17 missing cows that had traveled 60 miles to get back to their old familiar, now dry range. These after their long trip were in better shape then the ones still on the ranch.

Bert, a fine horseman, raised registered Percherons, and later shifted his interest to Thoroughbreds, shipping many remount colts to Milwaukee to be used for Polo ponies.

Having a natural bent for solving crimes, Bert was well fitted by his knowledge of the people and the county to serve two terms as sheriff of Mellette County. He succeeded in trailing some horse thieves who were traveling incognito, to Albion, Nebr., with a herd of stolen horses. Bert took pictures of the horses there and showed them to the owners who were unaware that they were gone.

A man of great physical strength and stamina, quick of thought and action, without physical fear, Bert faced life with confidence and vigor in his beloved ranch country. On all his travels Bert often said he never saw anything that looked as good to him as the sign that said "Mellette County."

Louise has operated the ranch since Bert's death in 1956. Their daughter, Mary Louise Stanley, lives in Denver, Colo., but like her father loves the ranch.

# The Hutchinson Story

**By Mrs. Lawrence Krogman**

It was on April 26, 1916, that Linnet Gustin and Eugene A. Hutchinson were happily married at Jewell, Kans. The next three or four days were spent as a combined honeymoon and in getting things packed, because they were getting ready to leave for South Dakota to file on a claim. On May first they left Kansas. With them were Ralph and Cora Hutchinson and their small son Charles. They were fortunate to have a Model T Ford, which they packed to the top. Their three or four milk cows and two or three horses were loaded into one end of a box car while their few pieces of furniture were put in the other end. This freight car was shipped by rail to South Dakota.

It took about five days to drive through in the Model T. The trip was quite uneventful except about the third day the lights went out on the Model T and Gene sat on the front of the car and held a lantern when they wanted to travel at night. On May 5th they arrived at their claim which was located at the present Bud Hight place.

Their first house was a one room, box car type shanty. They added an extra bedroom by setting up a canvas tent at one end of the house. Their cupboards and chairs were mostly made from apple boxes. When they were here a couple of weeks several of their horses were missing. Since horses were very important, the only thing to do was to start hunting and see if they could be found. So Gene started out on horseback. By stopping and asking at each farm and in each town the horses were trailed to Winner, S. D., and finally located at Hamill, S. D., which was quite a distance from their new home. The horses had started back to Kansas and since there were few fences they had got quite a distance before being found.

That fall there was a school house built near their claim, so Gene taught school that first fall and winter. His pupils were Lester, Johnny, Glen, Elmer and Agnes Stromer; Bert Humphrey, Jr.; Henry and Sophia Filbrandt; Geraldine, Irene and Mildred Hutchinson. He received about $60.00 per month wages.

That winter they saved the cream and churned it into butter for later use, also they ordered quite a supply of foodstuffs, including some slabs of bacon from a mail order company, which was quite usual in those days. They had this food stored in a cave they had made. One day, while they were away from home, some dogs got into the cave and ate all of their butter and bacon. This was quite a loss as they had no money to buy more. Consequently, that winter beans were their main fare.

All their lumber, fencing supplies, etc., were freighted from Murdo with a four horse team. It always took one day to go up and the next day to come back.

Gene Hutchinson's "Home Sweet Home," 1920

Their first son, Gene C., was born the next summer on June 14, 1918. Doctor Schmitters, a lady doctor from White River, came out to their shanty. When he was about a year old, they moved to their present home place on the Little White River. They soon moved into their new house, which was like a mansion compared to their first shack. The kids, Charles and Gene, Jr., had so much room to run around in they hardly knew what to do with themselves.

On April 16, 1922, Mary was born. By this time, Ralph and family had moved into the house in White River that Waceks now live in. Mary was born there with Doctor Bouza in attendance. When she was three or four years old Hutchinsons were driving a team and buggy. They went places very seldom and Mary was so bashful that when they would meet someone on the road she would duck down in the bottom of the buggy and hide until they were past. It didn't help her shyness much, when on her first day of school in White River, the school house caught on fire. Wondering if each day of school would be like that, it took some persuasion to get her to go back the next day. Glen Lyle, was born at home on February 7, 1925. Doctor Mendenhall came out to their place with a team and buggy.

Larry was born on February 2, 1930. Doctor Reynolds was the doctor. March 24, 1933, Roger was born in White River. Doctor Silverstone was his doctor and he was the first of the children to be born in a hospital. Linda was born in the Murdo hospital on May 3, 1936.

The biggest problem in getting the kids to school each day was getting them across the river to meet the bus. Sometimes they waded across, rode horses across or walked across on the ice. Sometimes, before the river was completely frozen, Gene would wear his hip boots and carry the kids across. In winter they always left home in the dark and arrived back home again in the dark. Sometimes in the winter, the driver of the bus would drive up the river right on the ice, which saved quite a few miles on his route. Of course they had the river to cross each time they wanted to go to town. Finally they moved their house and other buildings to the east side of the river to simplify going places. It wasn't too many years after this that the new Highway 83 was built from Murdo to White River on the west side of the river. So again, their house was on the wrong side of the Little White River!

I guess nearly everyone remembers the drouth years of 1933-34. In the fall of 1934 the entire family went out with butcher knives and cut down the cane crop. The whole field netted them a small hayrack load. This didn't go very far in wintering the cattle and other stock. They were able to buy baled hay from the Government that winter. They kept the milk cows in the barn, rationing the hay out to them, trying to make it last as long as possible. Everyone remembers how thick the grasshoppers, beetles and crickets were. They raised quite a few turkeys and each morning they were herded out into the pastures so they could get their fill of grasshoppers. Those "grasshopper-fattened" turkeys tasted pretty good that fall and winter.

It was about this time that Mrs. Hutchinson's mother and father came out from Kansas to visit. Grandpa Gustin, noticing some of the neighbors taking their Saturday night baths, just a ways up stream, refused to drink the river water which was their only supply of water. So taking spades and shovels they went to the other side of the river and dug their first well that supplied good water. One of the old wells that had been dug, but was dry, was used as a means of refrigeration for a time. Butter, milk and cream were hung down in there and kept cool and sweet.

It was the custom in those days for the neighbors to get together in the middle of the winter and put up ice for use in the summer.

**Gene Hutchinson Family, 1955: Junior, Mary, Bud, Mr. Hutchinson, Larry, Mrs. Hutchinson, Roger and Linda.**

Hutchinsons have always lived on the same place except for that first year and a half when they came to South Dakota. They recently built themselves a new modern home. The children are all married and are living in or near White River, with the exception of Roger who is working on his master's degree and is teaching school in Elgin, Ill. There are 23 grandchildren.

(Since this was written, Eugene Hutchinson passed away at the Sandhills Hospital in Valentine, Nebr., on April 10, 1961. Our sympathy to Mrs. Hutchinson and family. W. R.)

# "The Last Man's Club"

By Clyde and Jessie Ilgenfritz

**1903 - - Indians**
**Pawnee City High School**

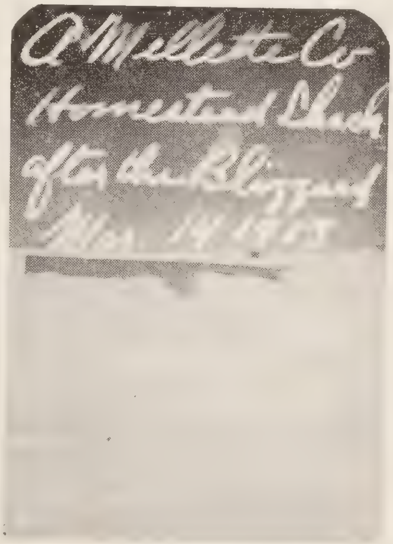
Ora Booth, 6249 Ingalls Street, Arvada, Colorado.
Edw. N. (Ed) Van Horne, 1804 North 53rd Street, Omaha 4, Nebraska.
William (Bill) Benz, Pawnee City, Nebraska.
T. G. (Tommy) Slater, 216 Nevada Street, Vista, California.
R. W. (Ray) Henninger, 1402 South 56th Street, Kansas City 6, Kansas.
Z. E. (Lote) Burnham, Route No. 3, Meridian, Idaho.
C. R. (Cotty) Ilgenfritz, Burwell, Nebraska.

"Planning for and looking forward to our 60th anniversary in 1963."

* * *

"The Last Man's Club" met at the Ilgenfritz home on Aug 12, 1961.

(Ilgenfritz stories and many pictures are in "Mellette County Memories" book. W. R.)



Swinging Bridge Over the White River

## In Memory of Clyde Ilgenfritz

From the "GRAND ISLAND (Nebr.) INDEPENDENT," of Wednesday, February 14, 1962:

### "ROAMING CENTRAL NEBRASKA"

By Jack Bailey

The hundreds of cowboys who took part in Burwell's Big Rodeo year after year and knew Clyde Ilgenfritz as "Mr. Rodeo" will not see his smiling face any more. He answered the final summons Monday (Feb. 12, 1962) at the age of 74, after a short illness.

Clyde will be missed, not only by the cowboys and Indians who participate in the big show each year, but also by Burwell and its citizens.

He was a fixture in the community and a valuable one. For years he gave his time and efforts unsparingly to make the rodeo a success. During that time, he dealt with cowboys like Casey Tibbs, Jim Roberts, and Jim Shoulders, the great and the near great, and he dealt also with those who came along just for the ride. But he treated them all with fairness and they respected him.

Clyde was a supporter of everything that was good for Burwell. He traveled thousands of miles in the past, cheering Burwell's high school's athletic teams in victory and consoling them in defeat.

He never had time to find fault with others. If he couldn't say a good word, he said nothing. He loved the simple things in life, a fishing pole and a river bank; a day in the hills that he spent with his wife on arrowhead hunting expeditions. He knew all of the beauty spots in the country and took delight in leading others to them.

Clyde was a devoted husband, a loving father, and an easy touch for the grandchildren he loved.

He was a good man and his passing will leave a void, not only in Burwell, but in the lives of those who knew and respected him.

# An Indian Dance in 1913

**By Buena Howlett Barclay**

I had an experience one winter that I will never forget. One of our new friends, Frank Perry, was the son of a Government teacher at the Indian Day School down by the river. Frank had grown up with Indian children playmates when there were few white settlers and spoke Sioux like a native. He asked us if we would like to attend an Indian Pow wow and dance. We said we would, so he organized a party of six or eight young couples from White River and that night we all walked down to the council house or dance hall near the Little White River.

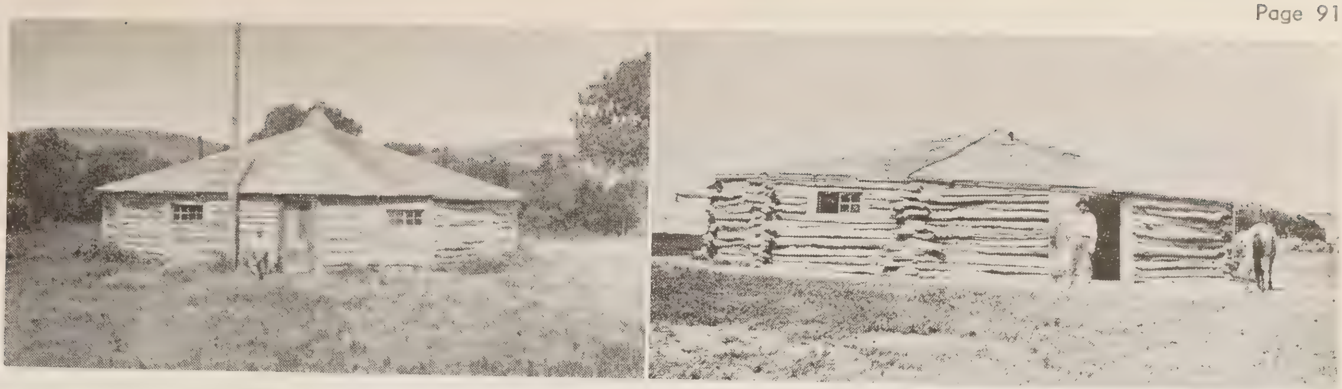
The council house was built of logs by the Indians from a design they had used for generations. It was octagon in shape, some 30 or 40 feet in diameter. The round roof was almost self supporting. It had a hole in the center and the council fire was built on the earthen floor in the center of the room. This furnished the only heat and almost the only light, a few pine knots for torches were used and all the smoke escaped through the hole in the roof.

We went in and were made welcome. We joined the squaws along the outside wall and sat cross legged on the floor to watch the proceedings.

The Indian men sat in a circle next to the fire according to age and rank. An old man out-ranked a young chief in prestige. First one man and then another would get up and talk. An Indian cannot be hurried, so the council lasted hours. Did you ever try to sit flat on the floor for hours at one time? We young people were getting very tired but Frank told us it was considered bad manners for guests to leave before the council was over.

At last the peace pipe was passed solemnly from hand to hand around the circle of braves and the chief stood up with his hand raised palm out. It was the peace signal but we didn't know that. The drummers began to beat their drums and a bunch of the Indian braves leaped to their feet, yelling, ky-ying, brandishing their tomahawks and war clubs, they began to dance.

We all got to our feet too, as fast as our cramped muscles would allow. I bet our hair also stood up, for Frank had not prepared us for this part of the meeting. I think I would have fainted if I had not caught a twinkle in Frank's eyes when I looked to him for guidance out of there before we were all massacred. Remember, this was only some 20 odd years after the Massacre of Wounded Knee and these Indians were Sioux.



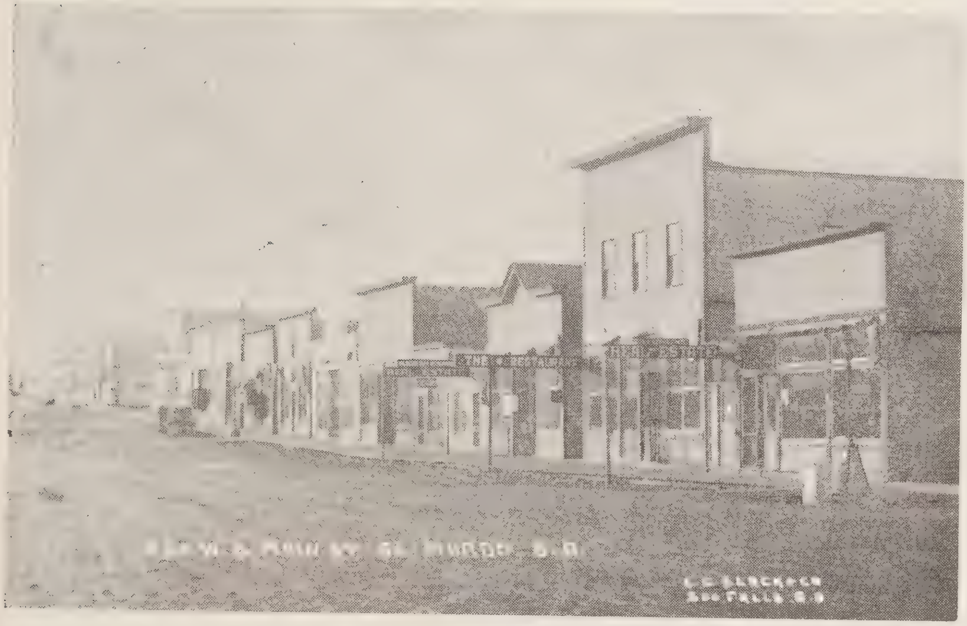
**Two Mellette County Indian Dance Halls (Pictures from John Glatfelter)**

By this time the squaws had gracefully risen and formed a solid circle around the dancing braves. They danced with a slow sidewise motion, so slowly you scarcely noticed they are moving, until suddenly you perceive that the one that was dancing right in front of you, is now almost across the circle from you. They chant ki-yi, ki-ya. Their beads and bells make a musical tinkling as they seem to bounce lightly on their feet. The men danced in the center in a more vigorous manner. They skip and jump, turning and twisting, always keeping their dance movement in time with the music of the drums.

As soon as our first fright was over we thoroughly enjoyed the dancing.

# JUST EARLY PICTURES

## From Many Homesteaders



**Above:**
**Main Street of Murdo Before June 1914**

**At right:**
**Memories of 1913 Blizzard in Western South Dakota. Chamberlain to Rapid City line. (Mrs. McCrorey's picture.)**

Mrs. Ada Burns, Mrs. C. A. Hagman and Mrs. Martha Hoy leaving Lamro, S. D. Before 1910. (Mrs. Louis Evans' picture.)

Spuds by the wagon-load. Hilko Jans with neighbors helping pick spuds, 1916 or 1917. (Jans picture)

C. A. and Walt Hagman, Mellette County homesteaders, 1913. (O. Hagman's picture.)

Stanley Hughs, John Ellweins and Jorgensons homestead shacks. Posts show points of location. Pictured are Stanley Hughs, Basil and Olin McCrorey.

Logan Homestead

John Romms Homestead

Miss Martin and Miss Weavers and Claim Shacks

Tom and Pat Bailey near their folks' homestead shack in the Cody neighborhood.
(C. Hagman picture)

Carl Walters' homestead across the road from McCroreys.

Mrs. Calvin Shaffer, Mrs. Henry New, Mrs. J. T. Hansen, Mrs. L. G. Evans, Mrs. Pete Jongwaard, Mrs. Ray Rankin, Mrs. Hugh Sinclair, Mrs. A. J. Krieger, Mrs. George Balint. (Mrs. Louis Evans' picture)

# James and Jennie Johns, Pioneers

By Naomi Taft

Among the early homesteaders coming to Mellette County were James and Jennie John. He came from southern Iowa and she had been born in Dakota Territory in May 1889, before South Dakota became a state that November.

Her parents had originally immigrated from Denmark to Iowa and then on into Dakota Territory as the railroads were built, working on the railroad and homestead homes.

**James and Jennie John on their golden wedding anniversary, September 25, 1958.**

James and Jennie John were married in September 1908 and began farming in Spink County, then for a season in southern Iowa and later back again to Spink County. In the fall of 1912 they came to a place south of Winner for the winter. It was there, some seven miles south from Winner, that Mrs. John and a young boy who was with them that winter lived through a terrible blizzard.

James had gone to Winner for supplies. They couldn't see but a short distance ahead of them in the storm. The clothes line reached from the corner of the house to the barn yard nearby, so they tied a rope to the line and holding on it, went to the barn to feed the team and the cow. They also made it safely back to the house although they were close enough to touch it before they could see it. James stayed in Winner for three days until the storm let up. After the storm the next morning dawned, showing a land buried deep under snow drifts. The deep gullies were filled level with snow with the hill tops bare of snow, making the whole landscape look unnatural. The snow though many feet deep, was packed hard enough to walk on.

In the spring of 1913 they loaded their wagon with lumber and tools, then drove into the beautiful Surprise Valley in Mellette County and claimed their homestead. They built a shack, planted a garden, a little corn and potatoes in the sod. That was rich earth and those first potatoes yielded a pailful to the hill.

That summer they dug a shallow well. It was the first well in the Valley. Other homesteaders took their barrels and hauled water from the Looking White spring. So many people came there, and the flow of the spring was so slow, that wagons were there waiting their turn from sun-up until dark.

The homesteaders brought along small things and odd jobs that could be worked on while they were waiting. The homesteaders used that water sparingly. They first washed dishes, then clothes, floors and also watered the cow.

At home, sod was cut to bank around the sides of the rubberoid-covered shack. A pole and hay barn was built. There were no fences and the horses were turned loose to graze. That fall one fine team disappeared and Jim figured they would try to go back to the country they came from. He advertised in all the papers, asked newcomers if they'd heard anything about his team and the seasons passed with no news of them. Over a year later, in the spring a traveler told of a road construction crew down by Chamberlain where a fellow had a team like the one Jim was looking for. Jim took off on the stage east with high hopes.

He did locate the horses and saw the harness marks on them, so he waited and watched until the man had them harnessed and was working them, before making himself known or making any claim.

He was able to reclaim them and, because the horses were working, was able to avoid paying any "pasture bill" as the horses had been earning their keep. He returned to the homestead with them riding across country almost due west, crossing little White River north of White River town.

Gradually fences were built and fields were plowed. Fires were an everyday worry. One Christmas day was spent by the homesteaders fighting a bad fire that was finally stopped at a Badland ridge.

Trips to White River were rather rare. All the close neighbors would send along their grocery lists with whoever was going in. They would do all the errands besides and bring back the supplies and mail for everyone.

After the hardships of that first winter, Jim and Jennie loaded their wagon, in July, and traveled up to the big wheat country north of Huron, S. D., near Redfield, to work in the harvest fields. Along the way, they found water very, very scarce. They were even driven away from watering at some places by anxious farmers who did not have a drop of water to spare.

In the harvest fields, Jennie helped cook in the cook shack and Jim ran the steam engines. The harvest crew and the whole threshing outfit would move from farm to farm. At each place they threshed the grain which had previously been cut with headers and stacked.

The cook shack people fed the crew from a central location and very early in the morning, the men would roll out, go harness and feed their team. Jim and the separator men would go out to grease and adjust the separator, and fire the boilers. And then they would all wait for the call to breakfast. Jennie would step to the door and call; "Y-o-o-o-H-o-o-o. Breakfast." In the still morning air it could be heard a mile away.

By October, they would start home again to get ready for winter. The few cows and horses would be safe inside their pasture. There was water in the running creek and a neighbor checked the place occasionally, until the homesteader had his "Grubstake" and came back home again.

Those pioneers loved their land, and neighbors became fast friends helping each other frequently. Attending Sunday school in good weather became an all day picnic, with horseshoe games, ball games and visiting in the afternoon. Sometimes a group picked wild fruit; chokecherries, wild plums, grapes, buffalo berries and currants that grew in nearly every draw. The homesteaders would spread blankets under the bushes then hit the tree trunk and watch the plums or cherries fall down. This was especially effective in getting the buffalo berries off their thorny branches. The homesteaders counted on this wild fruit as they all made wonderfully flavored jelly, jams and even sauce.

One particularly memorable evening Jim John and Henry Kaufman played the music for a dance at the Ries school. They returned to Henry's shack afterwards, started a fire in the cook stove and then went out to look after their horses. As it was nearly morning they decided to stay in, warm up and rest a while. When they came into the house they smelled burning hair. They opened the oven to find a cat who had sought the warmth of the oven and had singed her tail. The fire was roaring but luckily, the oven floor was barely warm, only the side next to the fire was hot and the cat had got against that.

Home life was busy and the women who were new to the ways of pioneering all learned to bake bread, can fruits and vegetables, make pickles and jellies, dry corn, peas and beans and to save garden seeds from choice plants to plant next year. They rendered their own lard and used the cracklings to make home made soap. The loft or attic often held seed ears of sweet corn and bags of seeds besides whatever else could be stored in that dry space, out of the way until needed next spring.

One time a neighbor's boy saw a pan of delicate brown squares and was tempted to taste it. It did look good enough to eat but he very quickly spit out his bite of homemade soap.

Finally the land was theirs, but they saw no room to expand their ranch there. So with a toddling girl who had joined them, they moved to a ranch five miles southeast of Norris and started a cattle ranch on leased Indian land. A new venture in response to the Government's plea for more cattle and more meat.

Nature and the labor available were unkind partners and the cattle suffered as well as the owner. In 1919 the cattle were ready for market in August. The price was good and Jim ordered railroad cars to ship out to Omaha. But it was late December when the railroad cars came to Kilgore and the cattle were driven to the railroad yards. The hay had been good, but still was in the fields as help to get it stacked had been impossible to find. Deep snow had covered it since October 16th. The cattle had shrunk and so did the prices. It was Christmas day when they finally arrived in Omaha and many of the cattle had frozen feet.

During and immediately following World War I, many homesteaders proved up, sold out and left the country.

Mr. and Mrs. Tuthill homesteaded in Surprise Valley about 1912 or 1913. In 1919 they decided to move farther West. They loaded all their possessions into their wagon and started out. When they were near Norris, S. D., their wagon broke down and they went to the James John ranch to stay three or four days while Harold Fowler, another homesteader and the Norris blacksmith, repaired the wagon. The Tuthills started out again but when they were out in Bennett County the wagon broke down again near a school house. Having no money to go on they decided to camp a while right there. They had quite a few groceries and supplies with them so to get a little money they began selling groceries right out of their wagon. They did such a good business they soon put up a store. And that is how the town that is now known as Tuthill got its start.

**Clarence Graham and nephew, Ken Taft, in his arms. Max Taft at left.**

During the years that followed, prices fell, corn sold down to nine cents a bushel. Many people burned corn as it made a cheap fuel and coal was expensive. Besides, coal had to be hauled from Belvidere. That was a two, or sometimes three, day trip depending on the size of the load or if muddy roads slowed the traveler.

It was unpleasant to the farmers to burn corn as the memory of those suffering, starving cattle of a few years ago was still in their minds.

Jim got a 15-30 Hart Parr tractor and began breaking prairie. He fenced these fields and began farming in earnest. Some of the neighbors felt the need of a threshing machine and went together to get it. It was one of the first in western Mellette County. Jim John and George Harris told of doing a homesteaders threshing before breakfast. The roads were gumbo and sometimes it was hard to move the machinery.

In the fall of 1922 a big fire swept across the pasture destroying the grass and the hay. Jim hooked a plow behind his Model T and plowed a fire guard around his buildings and haystacks. Then by backfiring, he was able to save them, although the fire went by on all sides. This happened in the night. Jim left the Model T running and the three children with their mother were all dressed, with blankets and supplies, prepared to try to escape, if the fire got inside of the fire guard. The wind was blowing hard, but somehow the fire went around them and they were spared.

Later Johns left the ranch, moving close to Norris, S. D., to a farm where they built a log house. By farming and running a few head of stock they kept going until the depression and drouth. Then they moved off of the Indian owned farm land in 1936 and moved onto a quarter of land that they had bought many years before and that remained their home for some time.

In the 1920s he had broke that quarter and planted crops on it. On one piece of bottom land he had planted alfalfa. One year, from one acre, he harvested nine bushels and fifteen pounds of clean alfalfa seed. Later the grasshoppers destroyed the alfalfa and clover fields.

During a dry season Jim took a job in the Eastern end of the County where he helped build roads. He often saw rattlesnakes and they would even be brought up on the grader elevator, there to tumble onto the platform and on off. One morning, two rattlers lay on his bed roll when he woke up. He quit that job and left for home!

In the early 1930s he started a windbreak of trees. The winds blew some of the little trees out and buried others. But by repairing this damage and replanting every year for many years, he was able to get a good stand of Chinese Elm and a few other varieties. Those Chinese Elms are the parent stock of many neighboring windbreaks in that vicinity today. Seeds fell and little seedlings came which Jim generously shared with his neighbors.

They were glad to watch the country develop. Better roads, schools and even R.E.A. They saw the population at first grow and then dwindle again during the 1930s but still the country progressed from the prairie stage.

In September 1958 a few of the neighbors came in and celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary with them.

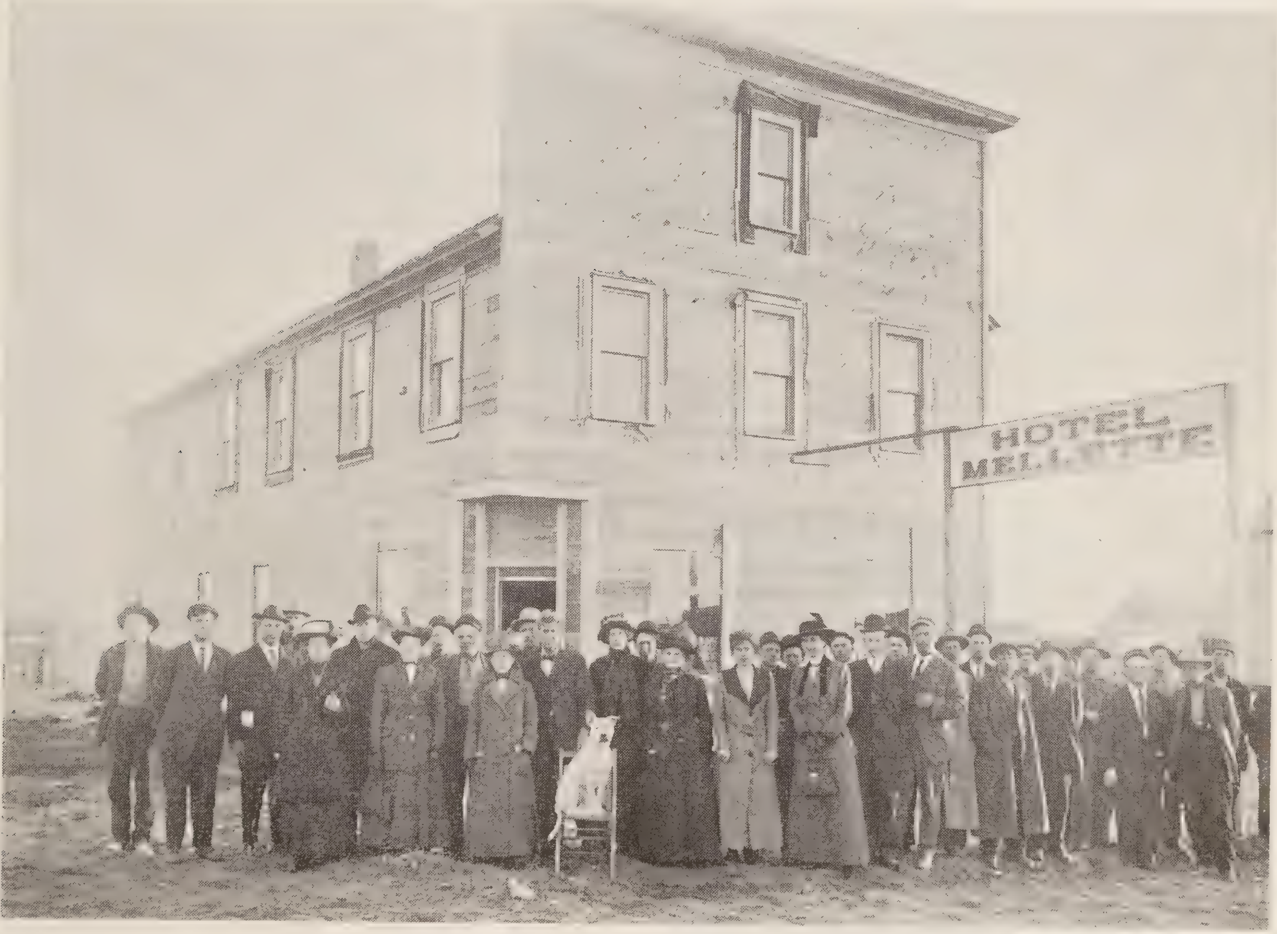
## GOOD NEIGHBORS

All of us who pass this way
  Have twenty-four hours to use each day.
Some of us—'tis safe to say—
  Waste the entire time away.

Some folks are work and worry bent,
  On their own problems so intent
They haven't time to swap a smile
  Or be a friend for a little while.

But for those who take the time to do
  Kindly things as they pass through—
With cheer and a helping hand, too,
  We say: "Good neighbors, we thank you!"

—Winifred Reutter, White River



**Homesteaders ready to file April 15, 1912, in White River, S. D. Building is now Lodge Hall.** (Glatfelter picture)

# The Jordan Story

By Wm. Jordan

Charles P. Jordan was born in the town of Piqua, Ohio. and when he reached the age of 16 decided to quit school and went to work in Chicago, Ill. He operated a livery stable and was engaged in the Taxi service when horse drawn vehicles were in vogue.

Before the Chicago fire of 1870 he and a close associate by the name of John Evans joined the famous Lou Dockstader's minstrels. With the troupe of comedians, usually white men made up as negros, Jordan played banjo and sang bass and his associate John Evans played guitar. Afterwards Evans was engaged with the Lyon and Healy (musical instrument) Manufacturing Company.

When C. P. Jordan came out west to Fort Robinson, Nebr., in 1874 his brother William H. Jordan was then a commanding officer of the post. There the former was appointed chief clerk for the quarter-master department. After having served under the War Department for a few years C. P. was transferred to the Red Cloud Agency in Nebraska, where he was employed as chief clerk for the Interior Department.

Jordan's friend, John Evans, left Chicago and settled in Omaha, Nebr. He not only tuned pianos but established a repair shop for musical instruments. He made a guitar for his friend Jordan, as a special gift, which had pearl inlaid decorations.

By happenstance the two old cronies located each other in Omaha, Nebr., after an elapse of 30 years when they did not know the whereabouts of each other.

Col. Jordan's first wife was an Ogalalla Sioux; she died in childbirth and is buried in the land near the forks of Big White and Little White Rivers. The Ogalalla Sioux had camped at this place for the winter. His second wife was Julia Walks First of the Red Cloud band. Rev. William J. Cleveland, then missionary among the Sioux, married them. Of this marriage nine children were born: Charles, Edwin, William, Mary, John, David, Everard, Collins and Ella. Only three children are living at this time: William, residing at Mission, S. D.; Mary J. Bordeaux at White River; and Everard, now Helper at the Episcopal church at Greenwood, S. D. One of the sons, John David Jordan, was at White River, acting as deputy treasurer for his father, Col. Jordan, when Mellette County was first organized. He died in 1914. Col. Jordan, at his request, is buried under a simple marker, at Mediator Chapel near Wood, S. D. He loved his children and lived with them until his death January 6, 1924. His relatives in Chicago, Ill., wanted him to return to them, but he preferred to live in the West.

Col. Chas. P. Jordan and wife, parents of Wm. W. Jordan.

(C. P. Jordan was very prominent in early Mellette County history. His ranch on his wife's land south of Wood was a famous ranch in early days. Mary Bordeaux passed away recently. W. R.)

* * *

## Indians in the Cattle Business In the Early Days

According to some historians, the Indians did not take very much interest in raising cattle. Perhaps some of their experiences in cattle dealing was actually what discouraged some of them.

I remember when my brother Edwin was drowned in the dam near our ranch in 1905. We had a big herd of cattle running on free range in Meyer County (later Mellette County). He came up from my father's store, where he was the manager, to help round up the cattle. Unfortunately, in attempting to swim his horse across the dam, the horse slipped into a creek bed waterhole which was obscured by the high water. He was thrown off the horse and unable to swim ashore with high boots on. Two of his brothers who were with him were unable to rescue him.

The Butte Creek Indians were encamped near the Day School where Mr. and Mrs. Paddock taught school, and their Tribal herd numbered about six hundred head.

When Mellette County was organized in 1911 the Indians were forced to sell out their cattle.

Major McLaughlin came to the Rosebud Agency on October 11, 1911, presumably to negotiate with the Rosebud Indians to buy Mellette County. When he realized the Indians were strictly opposed to the sale or opening of Mellette, he then, with no uncertain terms told them off, and I quote: "Regardless, whether or not you wish to sell your land, if the Congress of the United States decides in favor of selling it you cannot stop it."

In 1913 the Government issued cattle to the Indians and I was among those who received twenty cows with calves. I was holding down a homestead of 160 acres east of the Jordan ranch (south of Wood) which was all fenced in with three wires and posts about a rod apart.

Some of the Indians living on White Thunder Creek did not want to be bothered with herding cattle and sold their issue cattle. I purchased some until I had about one hundred head on my hands. Where some of these cattle were running on other Indian allotments, occasionally they'd get into some cornfields belonging to a homesteader. It was impossible to keep them from damaging the growing crops so finally I tried to get a Government permit to ship out all such cattle.

The superintendent at Rosebud charged me with creating a monopoly in buying I. D. cattle under market value and I was denied a permit.

I was forced to ship two carloads of the I. D. stock out of Winner, S. D., and when the cattle reached South Omaha, Nebr., the brand inspector detected the I. D. brands and the proceeds of the sale had to be sent to the Rosebud Agency. I had to forfeit all the profit, besides a $3.00 trespass fee was imposed on each head.

All the Indian cattle owners were forced to sell out. It was a big mistake for the Government to make the cattle issue in 1913 to the Indians when all of the rough, free, range lands were now taken over by the homesteaders.

And that is the story of the Indian side of the early day cattle dealings. The whole story would make a long one so I will bring this to a close.

# The Tom Gallagher Family Story

**By Mrs. Felix Kaegi**

I was Naomi Gallagher, the only daughter of Tom and Nellie Gallagher. They, and their two sons, Selby and Clark, are deceased so I am the only one of the family living.

In 1908 my parents were advised to leave Nebraska because Selby had asthma. The folks knew a family by the name of Ed Kavanaugh who had gone to Burke, S. D. When they learned of my brother's condition they wrote that there was a farm, not far from town, for rent. My dad went out, leased the farm, then mother, the boys and I followed.

I have wondered many times just how my mother felt when she arrived and found out that we were to live in a two room sod house with a dirt floor. The understanding had been that we were to have a new frame house which was built. This farm was owned by Sol Slaughter.

When the Rosebud Reservation opened up my father and several of the men went out and registered for claims. Some drew numbers but never returned to file on them. My dad filed on a quarter section out of White River about six miles, if my memory is correct. This was just at the edge of the Little Badlands east of town.

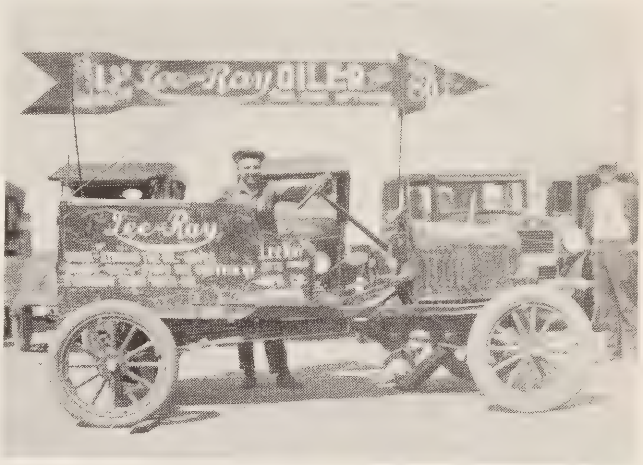
My dad went out to the land, built a shell of a house, 12 x 18. He came back to Burke and moved us out to the homestead. We were one of the first families to move into that area.

Before winter set in, Mother got busy and used cardboard, newspapers or whatever she could find and papered the inside of the house. Then put wallpaper on the walls on top of that, which made it not only warmer but much more livable.

One of the first things Mother did, was to go to White River and contact customers for butter and eggs. I believe at first she only had one or two, but it didn't take long until she had more customers than she had butter. One of the first ones was Mrs. MacLean (He ran the barber shop). Mrs. MacLean was one of my mother's dearest friends. Butter, eggs and whipping cream were our means of income at first.

My father rented a school section adjoining our quarter. He started to raise cattle and hogs. Our farming was on a small scale; we raised potatoes and vegetables plus corn for the pigs. The cattle were fattened on the wonderful prairie grass.

Selby married Dessa Kelly from Chamberlain, S. D., who worked in the bank. They lived in White River for many years and their daughter, Patricia, was born in White River. Clark was married to Herthel Brizendine and one son was born, Selby Clark. I married Alfred Batman and have one daughter, Marie Katherine, she is married, lives in Toledo and has two children, Patricia and Barry David. My husband died in 1954. Clark died in 1950, Selby in 1944. My father, Tom, died in 1937 and Mother in 1944.



Selby Gallagher and Don Jones

Every new community needs church service of some kind and we homesteaders were not any different. The community mothers and fathers got together and a Sunday School was started. At first we only had Sunday School at the various homesteaders shacks. Then someone heard about a minister living across the river south of the Indian church. He was contacted and accepted the call.

This minister was Rev. VanValkenburgh. They had four children, Paul, Louise, Carlos and Roland. The trip each Sunday was, I believe, about a ten mile trip. But he was always faithful; rain or shine they were there at the meeting place.

It was from this first meeting place that the plans were made and a dream fulfilled so that the Happy Hollow church came to be built. Many ice cream socials and box suppers were also held at the school house which was a homestead shack. In the Happy Hollow community it was said there were nineteen bachelor homesteaders. There were George Schambacker, Al Moorhouse, John Glatfelter, Frank Jarboe, Homer Wilson, Charlie Kerlin, Homer Gillespie, Neal and John Staat and others.

One of the most wonderful memories that I can recall was the wedding of Grace Brown. She was married in our front yard. She was married by Rev. VanValkenburgh to Mr. Hanna, her childhood sweetheart. We had a huge campfire in the yard. She was wearing a beautiful Indian blanket draped around her and she was escorted in front of the fire where the groom was waiting. There they were married. After the ceremony,

Happy Hollow School

the many friends congratulated them and a big feast was spread for all. Later they went back to Lexington, Ky., where her husband came from. The childhood impression of this special occasion has always lingered in my mind.

The church was built by all the men. Some, who could not carpenter gave a helping hand in other ways. I recall John Glatfelter was the carpenter and I believe Al Moorhouse and Art Turner also helped. Anyway, everyone helped in some way to build what later became known as the Happy Hollow Congregrational Church. Nellie Housman played the piano. Ruth Housman and I sang some duets as did some of the others.

My mother worked for the church and the community; she delivered many babies and also took care of the sick. Whenever anyone needed help, they knew where they could find us. They would go get Nellie Gallagher and she enjoyed helping them.

One Thanksgiving the neighbors gathered at Jarboes' for a community Thanksgiving dinner. Everybody brought food and the tables were set up outside. After the meal they would sing songs. The children would play games and the adults would make plans for other social gatherings and how to work for the church fund, etc.

I remember our first Christmas tree in Mellette County. It was a native evergreen cut in the Badlands adjoining our homestead. The tree was trimmed with homemade decorations. We strung popped-corn and cranberries. Also made chains of paper links pasted together. The tree was lighted with wax candles and this was supervised by my mother, but every precaution was taken to avoid a fire.

The first school held in the Happy Hollow district was called "Kylen College 1913." This was the homestead shack of Gus Kylen who gave up homesteading. The neighbors decided to use this empty shack for a school house until a new one could be built. The first teacher was Anna May Bramer who later married John Falk. We were three miles from the school and walked the greater part of the time. Well do I remember my mother wrapping our legs first with newspapers, then wrapping them again with gunny sacks to keep out the cold and snow. Also I remember, one time when my brother Clark and I were not too far from the school, and we were chased by a wild range steer. The teacher opened the door and let us in and the steer hit the door with his horns. That was a day never to be forgotten. School was only held there one year, then the men got together and built a school house. Some of the first pupils were Mathilda and Elizabeth Sorensen; Naomi and Clark Gallagher; Winifred Turner; Ruth, Nellie and Ward Housman; and the Anderson boys.

I remember how the Anderson boys and my brother Clark used to trade sandwiches from their lunch pails. The Andersons came from Indiana and they had been out here longer than we. He carried a bacon sandwich with store-bought bacon, and Clark had a home-smoked ham sandwich so each kind was a different treat for the other. The Anderson boy said, "Gee, this is the first 'really hog' I've had."

I want to add in closing that the hardships we had out there in those pioneer days have never hurt me. Many times since I have felt that in knowing those hardships it has made some of the ones in later life seem just a little bit easier.

Paul and Louise Van Valkenburgh beside the Happy Hollow Church.

HAPPY HOLLOW

Happy Hollow folks enroute to Frank Jarboes for a picnic.

# The Karlin Story

**By Mrs. Wm. Banek**

Mr. and Mrs. John Karlin came to South Dakota from Russia in 1907 with their two sons, John and William. They lived near Herrick, S. D., for two months and then rented a farm near Carlock, S. D.

This place had a small sod house with several windows missing. They moved on the 27th day of December and the next day a snow storm hit. There they were, with two young children—the younger one was only nine months old. But they survived the storm and lived there two years.

Then they homesteaded in Tripp County near Millboro in 1909, living there for nine years. In the fall of 1918 they moved to a farm near Tripp, S. D., where they lived for five years. In 1924 Mr. Karlin came to Mellette County to attend the Indian Land Sale and bought three quarters of land, near what was then the Kary store.

He leased a small shack about a mile south of the Dave Deutsch place. In the spring of 1925, he, his wife and six children moved to Mellette County.

Mother Karlin and the four youngest children came on the train.

William came on the freight train with the milk cows, horses and machinery. It was his job to milk the cows and take care of the livestock enroute. John and one of the neighbors left Tripp, S. D., at noon with a load of furniture on a Model T truck. They arrived at Chamberlain by sundown, so they put the truck in a garage, had supper and got a hotel room.

There was no road bridge across the Missouri at that time and the only way they could cross was by flat car on the railroad bridge. After supper, they went down and talked to the depot agent and were told that they had better load the truck onto the flat car that night, as the train came through at six A.M. So they had to take it out of the garage and load it on the flat car. This was the same train which Bill was on with the livestock.

They crossed the river, unloaded the truck and drove on to Belvidere, S. D. They arrived there that afternoon and they had to wait until morning for the freight train to get in.

Meanwhile, one of the neighbor boys, Reinhold Deutsch, had come up to Belvidere with their wagon to get a load. They hitched the horses to the wagons, loaded them and started for the new home. Two of the wagons went on ahead but one stayed behind with the cattle which were driven afoot.

It was late that night when they got to the Fuerst place. They continued on home the next morning.

Then the work of building the new place started. As soon as the basement was built and a roof put on it, the family moved in. There wasn't any chimney so the cookstove had to set outside. That was fine when the wind was right, but when it wasn't in our favor the stove didn't work very well. One day, a big batch of bread was ready to be baked but we couldn't get the oven hot. The boys had to take the trusty old Ford and take the bread down to Dave Deutsch's to be baked which was a distance of around five miles.

Mr. Karlin passed away on May 31, 1948. Mrs. Karlin and son, Tobias, still live on the home place. John, Jr., lives in Mellette County. Bill moved to Turner, Ore., in 1937. Leona, Mrs. Fred Merchen, lives at Bloomfield, Nebr. Emma, Mrs. Herbert Waack, and Marie, Mrs. Wm. Banek both live in Mellette County.

A newspaper item concerning Karlins is as follows:

FORMER MELLETTE BOY
KILLED ABOARD WARSHIP

The navy announced today that fire from communist shore guns killed seven men and wounded one, abroad the destroyer U. S. S. Lewis, off Wonsan, Korea. The new casualties bring to 130 the number of men killed on Naval duty in Korea since the start of World War II.

An Oregon boilerman, Arnold William Karlin, son of Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Karlin was among the sailors killed. They formerly lived in Mellette County. He was a grandson of Mrs. John Karlin, Sr., of White River, S. D.

# The Life of William and Cordelia Kary

**By Bess Adrian**

Mr. and Mrs. Kary were the owners and operators of the Kary Postoffice and grocery store at Kary, S. D.

William F. Kary was born December 1, 1880, in Cincinnati, Ohio. His parents passed away when he was quite young so he went to live with an aunt in Northeastern Iowa when he was six years of age. His brother, a retired mail carrier, still lives in Cincinnati.

Cordelia's father was a doctor. After high school, she attended college at Ames, Iowa. She was a graduate of the Capitol City Commercial College of Des Moines, Iowa. Later she took nurses training at the Cook County hospital in Chicago where she became a registered nurse.

William Kary and Cordelia Lowry were married at Galena, Ill., in 1900. They moved to Grand Junction, Iowa, where Mr. Kary worked as an engineer in a brick factory. There was a shortage of help, so he often worked during the extra shift at the brick kiln to earn extra money.

Their son, William, was born at Des Moines, Iowa. When he was about five years old, Karys decided to file on a homestead in Tripp County, S. D. They left William with his grandmother while they came out to homestead. That was in 1909 and Lamro was still the county seat of Tripp County. They lived in a tent until they got their shack built. Their homestead was four miles northwest of Winner on Dog Ear Creek.

The next few years were dry in Tripp County. Many

**Mr. and Mrs. W. F. Kary, Sr., and son, William F., Jr.**

of the people, who had come west with high hopes of making an easy living on a homestead lost their nerve, packed their few belongings into their wagons and started back East to their former homes. Even though their spirits were low those discouraged homesteaders had a humorous side. Mr. Kary recalls one wagon, going East with the following inscription written on its canvas cover; "To hell with this administration. We're going home and live with our relatives."

Mrs. Kary's skill as a nurse came in handy whereever she lived. She delivered many babies besides caring for sick neighbors. During the fall of 1918 they were called to many homes to care for those who were ill with the flu. At the Ed Hill home in Tripp County, Mrs. Hill gave birth to a premature baby while she was very ill with the flu. When she realized that she was going to die, she asked Mrs. Kary to take care of the baby if it lived. The child was very weak but Mrs. Kary fed him with a spoon until he was strong enough to take a bottle. They named him Edward Hill, Jr., and raised him like their own son. He now lives on a ranch west of the Kary home. He married Erna Deutsch of White River and they have six children.

Some of the things that Mr. Kary remembers about early Tripp County are: There was a big blizzard shortly after the railroad got to Winner. Snow drifted into huge banks and a snow plow was being used to try to clear the railroad track. Some of the businessmen went out to watch the snow plow at work. A dentist who was standing on the snow bank, got too close to the edge. It caved in and he smothered to death before they could get him out. He remembers the prairie fire in which Steve McGreavy was burned so badly. The Kary home would have burned, but a well-worn trail about two miles from their place stopped the fire.

There were so many dry years that the Government granted the Tripp County homesteaders an extension on proving up on their land. They were required to live on it five years, pay six dollars per acre, besides the filing fee. The homesteaders who were stout-hearted enough to stay were later repaid by good years in which they got rains and raised good crops. This caused the land value to soar and in 1918 Karys were able to sell their homestead for $100.00 per acre.

With this money they bought cattle and land in Mellette County. In 1918, they bought the South ½ 14 40-32. They moved there, living in a tent until their house was built. Mr. Kary hired an Indian to help him haul lumber. They used two four-horse teams, going to Belvidere, S. D., where they would stay overnight and come back with a load the next day.

Their carpenter's name was Gretschmann. Later Mr. and Mrs. Kary themselves built their big barn. It was a huge cement wall foundation. The rocks for it were hauled by Indians from the Little Chief's place, which is close to where Gail Lettellier lives now. They also hired several Indians to mow hay for them, about where Ted Sammons lives now. It required a lot of groceries to feed all those men. So Mr. Kary dealt for them wholesale at Crookston, Nebr. He had bought a Reo truck and it was while he was after a supply of groceries that he heard World War I had ended. He especially remembers that trip, because it was real nice at Crookston as he loaded his truck that morning. Suddenly a blizzard started and he had to wait there two days before it cleared so he could go home.

Some of the neighbors, who didn't have time or transportation to go to town for groceries would buy some from Karys'. So they decided to start the Kary Cash store and also applied for a post office. They sold gas and kerosene there, too. For years, the nearby Indians and settlers got most of their supplies at the Kary Store. When food was rationed in World War II, they quit the store business and later discontinued the post office.

Their daughter, Ann, was born during a blizzard, March 6, 1919. Mr. Kary wanted to get Mrs. Reece Bligh to care for his wife, but the storm was so fierce and Ed Hill was just a baby, so it was impossible for him to go after help. His wife's knowledge of nursing saved the child. From then on, she cared for her family, worked in the store and Post Office and many times worked a four-horse team in the fields.

One time, when Ed was three and Ann was two years old, Ed came downstairs leading her by the hand and said, "There is a fire upstairs." Mr. Kary ran up, found the rooms filled with smoke. There was quite a fire but they were able to get it out and save their home.

The winter of 1918-19 was very cold and this part of the country had a terrific amount of snow. It started in before Thanksgiving and continued late into spring. One late spring blizzard lasted several days. Karys had a long cattle shed with about one hundred head of cattle in it and twelve horses were tied in there also. It was impossible to get the stock out for feed or water during the storm. The cattle ate the hair off the tails of those horses. The horses chewed the four by sixes of the shed, that they could reach, until they were about the size of a man's wrist. When the storm let up, Mr. Kary and his son, William, tried to drive the cattle down to some stacked hay they had west of where Clarence Krogman lives now. That would be about five or six miles. They lost forty head of them on the trip because they were too weak to wade through the deep snow. They just died wherever they fell down. Later, many of them that survived this trip, died during calving time because they were still weak.

Once a hail storm hit their place and went south of Parmelee where an Indian was killed in it. Karys had a Model T Ford in a shed with a good roof on it. It was cross-supported with two by fours every four feet and one inch boards over that. The hail broke through the boards and also broke the windshield on the car. That storm killed a lot of hogs and did a great deal of damage.

Their son, William, married a Mellette County teacher, Mary Baker, and they had seven children. Four of these grandsons, William, Alfred, Robert and Steve, are ranchers in Mellette and Todd Counties. During World War II, William served in the army, in Africa and Italy in many severe campaigns. It wasn't long after he was discharged from the army, that he suffered a heart attack and passed away suddenly, in 1946. Their daughter, Ann, served in the W.A.S.P.S., as a ferry pilot from Dallas, Texas, delivering planes throughout the U. S. A. Later, she married H. O. Anderson, Minot, N. D. They have three daughters. Mrs. Kary passed away, in March, 1960 aged 83. She was buried at Valentine, Nebr.

Mr. Kary is semi-retired, spending his time between his Mellette County ranch and Minot, N. D., where his daughter lives.

# Yesteryears in Norris Vicinity

By Blanche Kaufman

### THRESHING

The first years that we had threshing to do, Daniel Schmidt's outfit threshed for us. The crew was made up of farmers in the community. They had an old steam engine and Walter Schmidt was engineer. Those men who lived nearby went home at night, the others stayed and slept in the granaries or on hay.

Walter would fire up at daybreak so as to have steam up after breakfast. The men harnessed their teams and were ready to go after a hearty breakfast. They worked till sun down or later then came in for supper. Of course they stopped for the big dinner at noon. There would be from 15 to 18 men to cook for. Usually the women exchanged work also but we always had so many chores to do that I could never help with supper away from home so I did most of my cooking without help. (I had sixteen cows to milk.)

Later the Government provided the local Indians with a threshing rig. We hired them one year. I went to town for supplies for dinner and when I returned the place was full of wagons, the machine was idle and the Indians spent a couple of hours having a pow-wow. Very little threshing was done that forenoon, which was very frustrating for a man who was ready to thresh.

**Our first threshing (1920). Gus Kaufman, Schmidt's outfit.**

After that deal four neighbors, Ray Briggs, James John, Henry and Gus Kaufman, went together and bought their own threshing machine. They did their own threshing then went out and threshed for the neighbors.

When combines came into general use that did away with the era of the threshing machine, just as horse power did away with the flail and the steam engine did away with horse power, but when harvest time comes it brings a touch of nostalgia to an old thresher.

* * *

### LIGHTNING AND FIRES

One often hears the remark that lightning doesn't strike twice in the same place, but it did on the Kaufman place. One year it struck the corner of the barn, tore the corner out of the barn and pushed the north side of the barn off the foundation. A few years later it struck the same barn and damaged the same roof.

One night in the late thirties, while relatives from North Dakota were visiting at the Kaufman home, a severe thunderstorm came up followed by a heavy rain. After the rain we smelled smoke but could not locate any fire. Next morning we still smelled smoke. We found that lightning had struck a straw stack and it had burned all night in the center of the stack. It burned several days.

In the late fifties the Norris baseball team was caught in a bad thunderstorm while coming back from a night game at Winner. As they were passing the Kaufman alfalfa field they discovered that there was a fire in the middle of one of the alfalfa stacks. This was a long stack of bales and there was another stack close by. The boys went to work tearing that stack apart and moved a lot of the bales away from the fire. Some one went on and gave the alarm and all the neighbors came to help fight the fire. Thanks to the boys most of the hay was saved. These stacks were in the same field and on the same hill where the straw stack burned about 20 years before—another case of lightning striking twice in the same place.

* * *

### ROADS

In 1922 a bridge was built across White River, south of Belvidere, between Jackson and Mellette County. This did away with the necessity of fording the river to Belvidere. A big celebration was held at the bridge.

Now Norris needed a road to get to the bridge. A committee was sent to Pierre to meet with the Highway Commission—P. H. Putman and A. C. Kaufman from Norris, L. A. Pier and Art Schuck from Belvidere, and Tom Berry were sent—a store keeper, a farmer, a banker, an insurance agent, and a rancher, quite a representative group.

They met in Belvidere and Mr. Pier took his car from there to Midland where they took the train to Pierre, stayed overnight in Pierre and met with the Commission next day. Mission completed—that is, the Commission agreed to add the road that is now Highway 40 to the State system. Chet Leedom was on the Highway Commission at that time.

That winter Heaton and McAllister contracted to build a road from Norris to Corn Creek so we had a road to the bridge which was greatly appreciated after having to ford the river or cross on the cable.

* * *

### CHARIVARI

In the early years no opportunity was overlooked for a chance to get together and have some fun. Weddings were something special because they usually meant a free dance, or a party of some kind. To be sure the happy couple didn't forget a crowd would gather for a charivari as soon as possible after the wedding. Everyone armed themselves with some kind of noise makers—dishpans, washtubs to pound on, cowbells to ring, tin cans and sometimes even shot-guns. The crowd would wait until the bride and groom had gone to bed then descend upon them with all the racket and noise. They kept up the din until they were admitted or the couple came out. The couple was usually prepared with cigars for the men and candy for the women and children. After a few tricks like making the groom ride a cow or the bride ride in a wheelbarrow, a dance was promised and the crowd dispersed leaving the couple in peace. If the couple were uncooperative, they might get ducked or otherwise mistreated.

Usually it was all good fun and the women prepared a big lunch for the dance and everyone had a good time. The groom was entitled to the first dance but after that the boys would gang up to prevent him from getting another dance all evening.

* * *

**First public school in Norris; Mildred Harrison, teacher, 1912.**

* * *

## BEN LOOKING WHITE

Ben Looking White was an exceptional Indian. He lived east and north of Norris. While he was young he wanted to learn to farm like the white settlers, so he watched his neighbors, when they plowed, he would plow, if they sowed grain, he sowed.

Each year he broke a little more ground and fenced it in. He did learn to farm and raised some very good wheat during the war years. One year he took some wheat to the Rosebud Fair and took first prize.

There was a wonderful spring on his land. Many of the settlers hauled water from there. Wells were very hard to get and the Looking White Spring had such an abundance of good water that it was very well known.

When Ben grew old he moved to the camp at Norris. His wife died a few years ago, last year Old Ben himself passed away. He was about 96 years old.

Ben did not read or write but he had a better understanding of money matters than most of his people. He would ask some business person to keep his money for him then he would keep very careful account of it and spend according to what he had, so he never went into debt and always had a little money.

A good example for a lot of other people, both Indian and white.

* * *

**Mrs. Little Chief, seated, with Minnie on her lap, Mary and two nieces behind her.**

* * *

## JESSE CHASING HAWK

Jesse Chasing Hawk, who lived at Red Leaf, was married in 1919. He wanted to give a wedding dance like his white neighbors. He came over to get the Kaufman boys and Jim John to play for the dance. He also invited the women folks to come to the dance. Gus's wife and sister went along. Had a very nice time.

They moved the furnishings out of all three rooms for dancing and set up a tent where the women prepared a very nice lunch of sandwiches, pie, cake and coffee. Everyone had a good time except Gus—he had a terrible toothache.

* * *

## CHICKEN RAISING

I used to raise a lot of chickens for those days. I'm sure I had the first incubator ever used around Norris (an M. M. Johnson). After hatching them it was a constant fight to protect them from skunks, weasels, coyotes and hogs.

One morning I went to the chicken house to catch some chickens to cook for threshers. When I opened the door the floor was covered with chickens just ready for frying. Most of them were dead; a few were staggering around. I buried 98 chickens that morning. Mink had been in there during the night. It came back the next night and we shot it.

* * *

## CEMETERY BUTTE

Cemetery Butte is located six miles north and some distance east of Norris. This was an Indian burying ground. At one time there were about a dozen or more trunks set on this flat-topped butte. They had rocks piled around and on top to anchor them. At this time they all contained bodies or skeletons. One grave did not have a trunk but rather a wooden box which contained three bodies of different sizes—apparently man, woman and child. We believe that a family must have died at one time and all been buried in the same grave. In addition to the graves on the butte there were three others at the foot of the butte. Only a few piles of rock remain at the present time.

### STORMS

One time a bad storm came up. Gus was gone so I took the children into the cave. Pretty soon the cave door lifted up and a man came rushing down. Didn't know whether to be more frightened by the storm or the man. Never knew who he was or where he was from. As soon as the storm was over he left.

I did the same thing one time. I was carrying mail from the Hamill post office during the war. I was caught on the road by a hail storm. I drove in a place and rushed into the house. There was no one home, but I stayed. The hail knocked the windows out. I held a bread board over one window to try to protect the rug. When it was over I mopped up, then went out and gathered up a bushel basket of half-drowned chickens, started a fire and dried them out. Saved most of them. Then I tried to go on with my mail. The wires had become wet so the car wouldn't start. Imagine my embarrassment when Mr. and Mrs. G. came home and found me—a perfect stranger—sitting in their kitchen surrounded by chickens.

# Teaching the Ring Thunder School

**By Inez (Dvorak) Komer**

I was hired to teach the Ring Thunder School in District 17 for the term of 1924-1925.

At that time there was only one school in the district. It was a tar-paper shack with windows on the east side. We had a coal heater to warm the building in the winter time. Like all tar-paper shacks it seemed that our school room was either too hot or too cold in the winter time. It was always hot around the stove and colder by the walls. There was no well by this school so the pupils and I carried water in pails from the Holladay home east of the school house.

During the school term there were as many as 24 pupils attending school so we had a full house and were rather crowded in the shack sometimes.

This was my first school and also my first time away from home, but I enjoyed every hour spent with my pupils.

I had three pupils larger than I was. This school was thirteen miles south and west of White River. I was paid $100.00 per month and Mrs. Helen Fridy was our county superintendent.

The pupils were seventh graders: Gladys Nelson, Mary Nelson, Jerry Telacek and Josephine Telacek. Sixth grader: Herschell Nelson. Fifth graders: Adolph Oyler and Jennie Jongwaard. Fourth grader: Laverda Fricke. Third graders: Hattie Mae Faris, Lydia Oyler, Helen Nelson and Charlie Oyler. Second graders: William Jongwaard and Melvin Eloe. First graders: Paul Eloe, Walter Oyler, Libbie Petr and Lester Fricke. Those in the primary grade were Lemuel Oyler, Valasta Petr, Rhoda Gatton, Robert Gatton, Lizzie Jongwaard and Leonard Jongwaard.

**Ring Thunder teacher and girls, 1924. Back row** (left to right): Josie Talacek, Inez Dvorak, teacher, Mary Nelson, Gladys Nelson. **Second row:** Lydia Oyler, Helen Nelson and Hattie Faris. **Front row:** Rhoda Gatton, Vlasta Petr, and Libbie Petr.

**Ring Thunder school boys, 1924** (Names not given in order pictured): Charley, Adolph, Lemuel, and Walter Oyler, Joseph Talacek, Melvin and Paul Eloe, Herchal Nelson, Robert Gatton.

All were very good pupils and interested in their school work and all school activities.

High-laced or button shoes and long black stockings were worn by the pupils at that time and bobbed hair was just coming into style.

The Ring Thunder School boys killed a four and a half foot bull snake southwest of the school house one day.

Mr. Anton Nelson was the clerk of the School Board, F. M. Holladay was treasurer and the chairman was Fred Kasat.

I boarded at the Armond Holladay home just north of the school. My own home was in Winner, S. D., where I lived with my mother and brother and I still live in Winner at the same location.

Some of my former pupils are deceased. In the past years I have seen Rhoda Gatton Jans, Lemuel Oyler, Hattie Mae Faris and Robert Gatton. Otherwise, I have not seen any of them since 1925.

On Saturdays, when I was teaching the Ring Thunder school, I would ride to White River with Fred Kasat who was the mail carrier, and spend the weekend with friends.

**At Barcals, 1925. Back row** (left to right): Inez Dvorak, Jessie Talacek (Lolley), Anna Barcal (Lunn), Ella Legner. **Front row:** Emily Legner (Gunner), Margaret Legner (Eklund), and Rosie Roman.

Mail came twice a week. I believe Mrs. Clayton had the Ring Thunder Post Office in her farm home.

I remember one time when I rode to town with Mr. Frank Petr in his sleigh. He had a beautiful matched team of horses. They never walked, but trotted all the way to White River. I also remember going out with Mr. and Mrs. Joe Petr, Rose and Joe Topinka to the Cody neighborhood and spending the night at the Barcal home where we visited with Frank and Anna Barcal.

I can recall the following families who lived in the Ring Thunder Community: Holladays, Claytons, Nelsons, Jongwaards, Didiers, Petrs, Strains, Eloes, Frickes, Oylers, Kasats, Mike Dimitroff and Marin Georgeff.

Farther north live the Lolleys, Bruces, and Gatton families, also a Timothy Carroll.

Mr. Dendy was Postmaster at White River, I believe; Mr. Barr and Shorty McDonald had restaurants and a doctor was Doctor Bouza.

Most of the families in Ring Thunder would ford the Little White River some distance south of the bridge when they went to town.

Later I married Leonard W. Komer who passed away February 18, 1961.

# Korbs Remember Mellette County

**By Mrs. Ed Korb**

I want to tell you a short story of our happy days when we lived in Mellette County.

Ed was in World War I. He went in 1918 and came back in 1919, he was overseas most of the time.

Ed and I (Emma) were married on January 5, 1920. Then we moved out to Mellette County in the spring. Moving on John Gretschmann's farm, we helped take care of the stock. I remember we had a bad spring with a lot of snow and rain and we were short of feed.

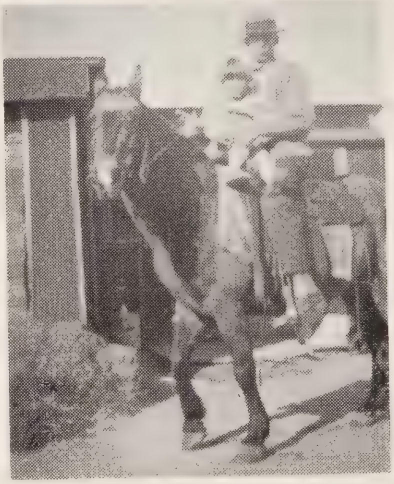
Ed took Mrs. Gretschmann and me out there in our car. We had a Ford. We had snow and rain for two days. Then Ed went back to get his wagon, horses and a few things for the house. He traveled through some very bad roads.

When we got settled Gretschmanns moved to White River and Ed and I lived on their place. We had pretty good crops that year. Our daughter, Lavina May was born that fall. Dr. Schmitters came out from White River and was our doctor.

We had good water; John Gretschmann had a good well and we also had a spring in the valley. We put our garden down there so we always had plenty of good vegetables to eat and can. We had plenty of milk and raised our own chickens so we had our own eggs and chickens to eat.

In 1922 our son, Edwin, was born. Later we moved to a place east of us. We lived there just a little over a year.

I remember that was a bad, cold winter. In January we went to Gregory County to visit Ed's folks and mine. It was a bitter cold trip. We put our son in blankets between the seats and let him stay wrapped up all the way to keep him warm. Our daughter, Lavina sat with us. It was over a hundred miles between our place and theirs. We were getting along fine until it started to snow. Ed was driving and it was hard to look out to see the road. It was just a Ford and had no top. Ed's nephew took care of our stock while we were gone. Even though it was a cold, bad trip we came back feeling better because we had seen our folks and had a good visit.



**Ed Korb**

Our place was close to the road so people often stopped in, sometimes for a drink of water and sometimes to stay overnight.

Next we moved to the Wm. Valburg farm. We had to cross the Little White River and the ice was going out. Lee and Wm. Valburg helped us move and we finally got our stuff across. Wm. Valburg got married and he moved onto his farm and we looked for a place where our children could go to school. We moved back to the John Gretschmann place as there was a school not far from there. Ed built on a bedroom and also a chicken house that year.

Some of the things I remember about those early years are: A big prairie fire, the fall before our son was born. It started south of us but it came quite close before they could stop it. Burned nearly all day. Ed

Mrs. Korb and Lavina

was gone fighting it. It was hot enough to break the glass in some of the windows.

One time, when we were living on the Valburg farm, Ed took some of our farm machinery across the river. He got over safely but when he came back he broke through the ice into the Little White River. They got the horses and wagon out but they were all wet and turned white with frost when he came home. We put the horses in the barn and put blankets on them and they were good as new the next day. Ed did not catch cold either.

I had a close call a time or two with the rattlesnakes, I always had to watch out for them.

There were lots of good folks out west; we had good neighbors, both Whites and Indians. One time there was a big rainstorm came up while we were gone. Our Indian neighbors stopped at the house for shelter but seeing we were gone they went into our cellar. A few days later they came to tell us that they had taken shelter in our cellar and to thank us. We had noticed someone had been in the cellar.

I well remember the first time I went out to Mellette County. Ed and I went out there when they had their Frontier Days. Oh, that was a real big celebration. The Indians had so many tents up and it was really something to see.

In the old days when we went to White River we did not have good roads, we just cut across as there were no fences. I remember the little school house where the children went to school; they had good teachers. Lavina went eight years and Edwin started there.

Once Ed got a wolf and he was a big one. When we lived on the Valburg place we had some adventures crossing the river sometimes. We often went fishing, sometimes out to Tuthill. Then there were the times that Ed and Lee Valburg went duck hunting. Oh, we had lots of happy times.

One year Ed and a neighbor bought a Ford truck and they went to help thresh. Ed would be gone all week so I and our two small children were alone. We milked ten cows. I would take the children in the wagon and go and pick corn for the hogs. We were sure glad at the week-ends when we saw Ed coming home.

I must mention our good saddle pony; he was so gentle I often rode on him after the cows with both of the children with me, one in my arms and one in the saddle with me.

After we left White River we moved south of Mission and now Ed and I have a home at Vermillion. S. D. Lavina is married and has a son and a daughter. Edwin is also married and has three children, two daughters and one son; they live in Washington state.

Thinking about the old times, reminds me about the drouth years, too—when the beetles came and ate up our garden. And when the flying grasshoppers were so thick that one could not see the sun. And where we lived we had sand storms. But, all in all, we had many happy times in Mellette County.

# Homesteading Days Near Berkley, S. D.

**By Astrid Kositzky**

My parents, Mr. and Mrs. L. K. Larsen, came to the U. S. A. from Denmark in 1900, living first near Elk Horn, Iowa, where I was born, later coming west to Tripp County where we lived for a while north of Old Witten. The main thing I remember about that place is that there were plenty of rattlesnakes!

Next we moved to the Mellette County homestead, four miles southwest of Wood or one and one-half miles south of the town of Berkley, in April 1912. I was only six years old but have a vivid memory of our sojourn by loaded wagons, and a team and buggy—how we came across country by following trails and crossing creeks. A neighbor, Sam Anderson, also made the trip with a loaded wagon. My mother, sisters and brothers were in the buggy but all took turns walking and driving the cows during the trip of 30 miles or so.

My father had been out previously and had built a rough shed with lumber freighted by team and wagon from Winner. That was the home we arrived at one fine evening in April 1912. In a few days the spring rains began. The roughly built shed wasn't much shelter. Horse blankets, canvas, etc., were hung to divide that shed into rooms for the horses, milk cows, chickens and our living quarters. The stock couldn't be turned loose because there wasn't a fence for miles and they would have wandered back to Witten. Anyway we were cold, wet and miserable until the sun shone again so we could dry out our bedding.

A two-room shack with sod roof was finally constructed where we lived for some time. That lumber was also brought by horses, the freighting taking several days on the journey to and from Winner.

My brothers, sisters and I attended school at Berkley where there was also a high school. Miss Della Ward and N. A. Gerig are two of the teachers I remember.

**Rosebud Grain Company, Wood, S. D., elevator and lumber yard operated by Wm. Kositzky (end of railroad).**

Della Ward walked to school from her homestead several miles from Berkley. Gerig lived in the Happy Hollow neighborhood; he came by team and buggy every day. We kids walked to school and were always in fear of being chased by cattle since there were very few fences. Roads were just buggy trails making short cuts across country. An old bachelor told us girls to bury our red sweaters if the cattle should ever decide to chase us. So we would always circle far around any cattle. Sometimes we walked or ran many, many more miles than the regular distance of one and one-half miles to or from school. There was a covered school bus hauling quite a number of scholars from the southwest or up in the White Thunder Creek area.

T. B. Holland had a grocery store in Berkley. As I remember, there were a number of buildings. (All of these buildings have since been moved away and the town of Berkley became a ghost town.)

In those days everyone lived in fear of prairie fires. I remember several coming very close to home and burning for many miles. One day while we were at school one of the largest prairie fires that I remember began burning some distance southwest of the school and burned many miles to the east and south. Our trail toward home was all burned over and it was dark before we attempted to walk home. I believe my father came with a lantern to help us find our way home. Everything was a huge, black darkness, at least that is the way it seemed to a couple of seven and nine year old girls, my sister and I.

I believe our teacher, Della Ward, was one of the first persons to own a car. A story about her and her new car goes like this: She came to school one day and couldn't remember how to stop the car. So she drove around and around the school house until she finally got the pedals figured out and came to a stop.

Some of the pupils I remember in the Berkley school were Hutchens, Siegmunds, Wagners, Walkers, Ericksens, Orrs, Sawyers, Palmers, and we Larsens.

After a few years, when the town buildings were moved elsewhere, the school house was moved three miles south into the Fairview district and is now known as the Orr School. It was moved with so-called winch or block and tackle using horses for power.

Our family survived the dreaded flu epidemic of 1918, but we learned of many people dying during the siege.

My early memories of Wood are very sketchy, but I do remember some Fairs and July 4th celebrations, walking four miles to Sunday School in the summer or going on horseback to town or to the neighbors. My folks bought their first car in 1925, a four-door Model T with side curtains.

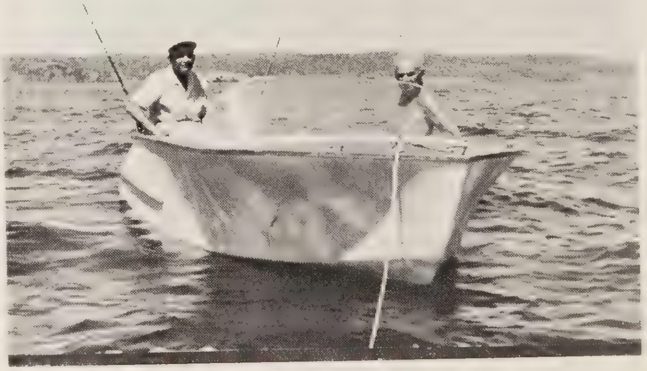
In March 1923, my oldest sister, Edna, who was working in Mission, came home very ill with what we thought was a bad case of tonsillitis. Painting the throat with iodine was prescribed by a Government nurse, Mrs. Pat McDonald, the patient unseen by the nurse, of course. In a few days my five year old brother, Harold became ill. After being ill only two days he died during the night. That was a terrible shock. My father hitched up the team and came into Wood in bitter cold March weather to call Dr. Bouza of White River. He came and diagnosed the case as diphtheria. By then my sister Anna, and brother Fred, were also ill. They responded to treatment, as did Edna. My brother Carl and I didn't develop the disease at that time because we were vaccinated with a serum. The whole family was quarantined for several weeks. Then in August, five months later, I contracted diphtheria apparently from a germ somewhere in our belongings. I nearly lost my life before realizing what I had and getting a doctor's care. I was unable to walk for several weeks.

But that March was indeed sad. Our little five year old brother Harold was placed in a crude pine coffin and buried in a grave dug in our apple orchard, where his body was to remain until the following fall when re-burial was made in the White River cemetery. My parents and brothers, Fred and Carl, have since joined him in that cemetery.

On February 10, 1926, I married Luther Schaeffer. I have three sons and seven grandchildren.

I saw those bitter, heart-breaking, Dirty Thirties. I could write at length of those days of depression, drouth, dust storms, grasshoppers and Mormon crickets. As if those things weren't bad enough, our house and all our belongings burned to the ground one July evening in 1933. We barely escaped with our lives.

One grasshopper story I can recall: I had some turkey hens steal out their nests and hatch out baby poults. One day I came upon a nest of hatching turkeys. The tiny new birds were completely covered with grasshoppers and they were being devoured as if vultures had taken over.



**William's brother, Ralph (Kositzky) Coe, with cap. He was first mayor of White River when town was organized.**

Also one day I was out in the yard not far from the house. Here came creeping, (and I mean creepy), scores of Mormon crickets so thick and moving so fast it looked as if the ground was moving. That really was a sickening sight!

I have seen all three sons go into the service, Army, Navy and Air Force, going to places like the Philippines, Alaska, Cuba and England, besides various places in the U. S. A.

My husband developed cancer and passed away in March 1954. Those 28 years could make a long story too.

After five years as a widow, I was married again, in 1959, to Wm. Kositzky. We live in Wood where he runs the lumber yard and grain elevator.

# The U-Cross Roundup in Mellette County

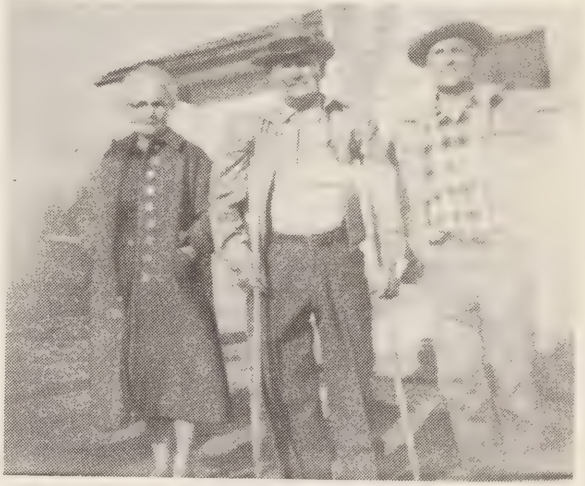
**By Frank Lanz**

I worked in the territory where the town of White River is now located, in about 1908. I was with the U Cross outfit when they had cattle grazing from the Badlands to the Missouri River.

When I was working in that area there was no town there. They held their last round-up down at the riverforks from where the town now stands. This is where all the outfits having cattle in that territory came together. There the cattle were sorted to be driven back to the headquarters of the ranches where they belonged. Some of the cattle could have been 40 or 50 miles from their home range or camp headquarters.

This annual windup would usually last about a week or so. There were nine or ten big cattle outfits, with a round-up wagon for each outfit. Each wagon had from 15 to 30 men working from it. It got to be a little rough at these round-ups and sometimes someone would come in with a barrel of whiskey and then more than the cattle got mixed up!

There were tens of thousands of head of cattle, mostly Texas longhorn steers, on the prairies those days.



**Lena Sorey, Frank Lanz (middle), Paul Lanz**

The U Cross outfit went out of business about 1911 and from there I went west to the Badlands to work for Fred Sears.

(Frank Lanz passed away since sending in this story. Our sympathy to the family. W. R.)

# Homesteading in Bad Nation Township

**By Mrs. Pearl Sherwood Larsen**

When Mellette County opened for homesteading in 1911, two young men from Ringgold County, Iowa, decided to register for the land drawing in South Dakota. My brother, Charles Brown decided not to file in 1912, but Glen Sherwood filed on SE 4 42-26. He built a 12 x 16 shack, hauling the lumber from Vivian, S. D., later bought another 12 x 16 room and those two rooms were to be our home for 25 years.

Glen's brother, John Sherwood, was married in Iowa, in November of 1912 and they came out to South Dakota where they lived in Glen's shack until he could purchase a relinquishment on another homestead nearby. Their sister, Lovilla (Mrs. Davies now of Winner, S. D.), came out later and bought a relinquishment on a quarter between John's and Glen's homesteads.

Glen returned to Iowa, put in a crop on his land there, and on June 30, 1913, was married to Pearl Brown, writer of this article. I was an Iowa school teacher and Glen made the remark to me that the Dakota prairie was no place to take a woman, but I told him that we'd go and prove up on the land. We loaded an immigrant car at Ellston, Iowa. (That railroad has since been discontinued.) Glen harvested his crop in Iowa and loaded it into the freight car along with the machinery, horses and tools. We also hauled some household goods, walnuts and apples.

In October 1913 the train arrived in Winner, S. D., and most of two days was spent preparing to move to the homestead in Mellette County, northeast of Wood, S. D. There were few fences and roads were a network of prairie trails. When the outfit left Winner it consisted of a hayrack and wagon pulled by the big sorrel team, Daisy and Nell. This team was used by many of the homesteaders and became well-known. Other horses were tied at each side, a wagon was behind that, next the driving team hitched to a top buggy, and last, a single horse hitched to a top buggy. This last belonged to Lovilla. We had a rooster and several hens penned in the buggy. This was all in one wagon train, handled by Glen in the hayrack. I, also, rode in the hayrack. Night overtook us before reaching the homestead and Glen took the wrong trail—my first experience of being lost on the prairie but not the last. I called Glen's attention to the position of the moon and he stopped. Seeing a homesteader's light, he took the team and buggy and drove there. It was Sherman Langley's place, so he knew we'd taken the

Westover Bridge, built in 1912; went out in 1960.

northeast trail instead of the northwest branch. We backtracked about two and one-half miles, then followed a trail that led us back to our homestead. We arrived there about three A. M.

Those eight head of horses were used by many to break sod and harvest crops and hay. Popcorn, beans, melons and pumpkins were planted in the rough sods with a sharp stick or hoe, and yielded heavily without cultivation. Rattlesnakes hid in those sods, too. We were wary of them, especially after my first experience with one. I was about to pick up a large watermelon and didn't notice a large rattler curled under a tumble weed until it sprang and almost struck me on the leg.

I recall taking two large pails of eggs to town packed in beans, trading everything but the pails for groceries at J. B. Brown's store. We threshed the beans by pounding them out on a large canvas by hand.

I also did my washing by hand with a tub and washboard for several years. Our water was hauled two and one-half miles from Ben Larsen's by team and wagon or from Gallineaux springs with a barrel or two on a "stoneboat" pulled by one or two horses. In June of 1914, Glen's father, Ed Sherwood, brought a carload of cattle from Iowa. John and Glen kept them on the shares for four years, giving them a start in cattle. There was also a brood sow for each, besides a hog and fat cow to butcher. Glen lost his start in hogs, when, on the Fourth of July, his sow got too hot and died. Their father stayed to help fence, as there was no way to hold the cattle on the open range. Ed went to Winner for lumber and wire but lost his way coming home; he let the horses go and Daisy and Nell led him safely back to the homestead.

I never liked to admit being afraid, but I used to sing at night if Glen didn't get home by dark, so as not to hear the howling coyotes, which came very close to the place in those days. In later years, I would take the kerosene lantern and go to see if the coyotes were bothering the sheep or young calves.

Most of the early day babies were born on the homestead. Doctors were from 30 to 40 miles away. Mrs. Bonga (later Mrs. Pat McDonald, of Wood, now deceased), field matron for the Indians, assisted in bringing many of the little homesteaders into the world. Also, Mrs. Oliver Larsen, Mrs. Agnes Kemp, Mrs. John Sherwood and later Mrs. Frank Gilliland gave of their time and skill. Glen rode horseback, one time, to get a doctor from White River for Lawrence Dustrudes. By the time they started for the Dustrude home by team and buggy, it was a pitch-dark night, so Glen walked in front of the team with a lantern to lead the way on the trail. When they reached the Dustrude home, the little newcomer was there to greet them and Lawrence had everything well in hand, so Glen returned with the doctor to get his saddle horse.

Mrs. Frank Gilliland and Mrs. John Sherwood were present (no doctor) when Glen Sherwood, Jr., arrived at the homestead September 11, 1922. He, with his wife, four sons and a daughter still live on the original homestead, raising quarter-horses and registered cattle. Our first child, Mary Evalyn Sherwood. (now Mrs. Rassmussen of Rapid City, S. D.), was born April 9, 1914, but not on the homestead as I went to Iowa to be near a doctor. Another son, Arthur Lee, was stricken with diphtheria in March of 1924 at the age of three and one-half years. No doctor could be secured for five days. After John Sherwood and Otto Fulsos had each made a trip by Model T in the mud, Doctor Hunt of Murdo, S. D., finally reached the home, but Arthur passed away shortly after his arrival.

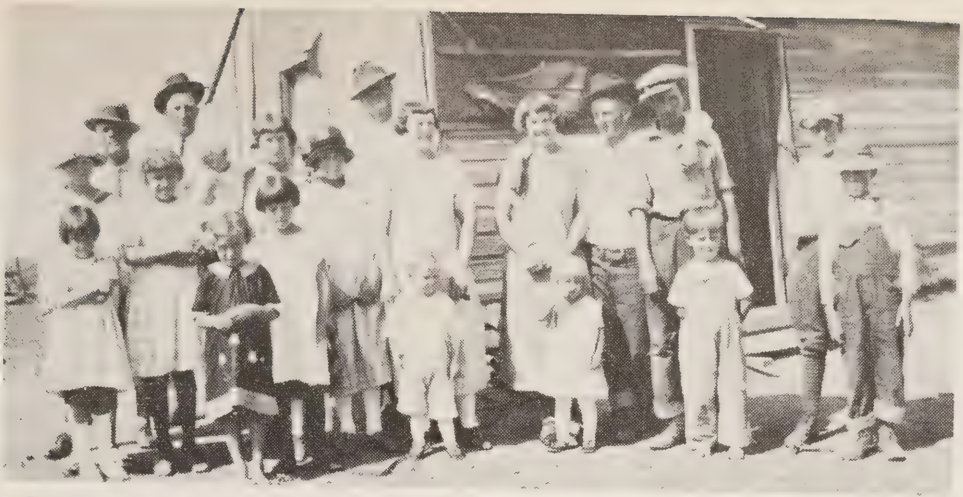
Our first tractor was a Titan. It was used to break sod and pull a threshing machine, belonging to my brothers, Vernon and Earl Brown. They came to Mellette County in 1925 and purchased Indian land near us, as did Ervin Dickson. Later, my youngest brother, Lawrence, and also a nephew Carroll Brown, came out from Iowa and are now residents of South Dakota.

Before the coming of the homesteaders, the Government had built a fence on the south side of the Big White River. My present husband, Harry Larsen, recalls helping remove this fence after the country was open to homesteaders.

Many loads of cow chips we hauled in for fuel, and many a load of ashes we hauled out after burning the chips, but they did provide heat for us in an emergency when dry wood was scarce.

For entertainment, we had social gatherings and picnics. Homesteaders with their teams and wagons would group together, then go for 12 to 20 miles to some place for Sunday School, picnics or holiday celebrations. Two such events I especially remember were at the Frank Richardson and Chester Kidwilers where over 100 people gathered. Most of the eats were homegrown as everyone raised big gardens. We also gathered lots of wild fruit. Many times I have taken a child or two, a sack or pail, on a saddle horse and gathered fruit.

Another early homestead get-together I recall, was at the H. O. Satree home, one cold winter night. The



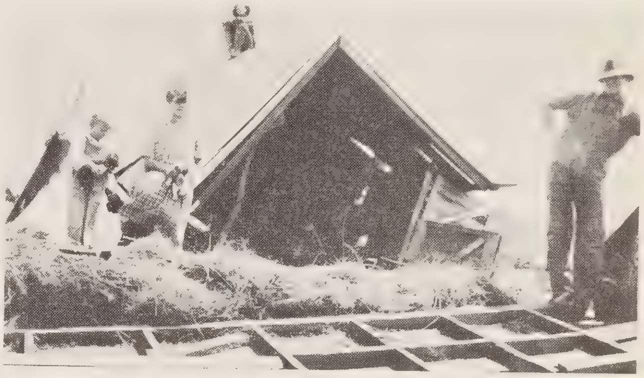
Left to right: Evelyn Sherwood (hat), Vernon Brown, Glen Sherwood (hat), Pearl and Junior in front; Les Misner family at right. Second man with hat, Carl Wilson and children in front of him; in front, two Misner girls, Freda Rittel in checked dress.

wind could always find its way into those shacks it seemed, so we decided to dance. For music, harmonica, pans, combs, etc., were used. Emma Satree (now Mrs. John Sibbert of Winnett, Mont.), Blanche Wilson (now Mrs. Montgomery of Caldwell, Idaho), and myself furnished the vocal. In 1914 Glen got a piano for me, then the folks would gather at our house for a song-fest. The piano was taken to the school house nearby and contributed to many a dance and program. With the co-operation of the neighbors, I was also instrumental in organizing a Sunday School there. Later, Rev. Wold of Witten, S. D., held church services there.

When the additional homestead act was passed we got another quarter section. Both are still owned and occupied by our son, Glen, Jr. I also own a section of land there purchased from other homesteaders. The Gallineaux springs are included in Glen's ranch. Before the coming of the homesteaders, this half section was a camp for the U Cross Cattle Company. Range cattle and horses came from miles around to water at these springs which have never ceased to flow the year around. When we first came, before the country was fenced, I counted over 200 head of horses going along a ridge in one string, to the springs. Part of them, perhaps all, were of the Alex Bordeaux herd.

In the early twenties some of the ladies decided we should have a neighborhood club. A meeting was held at the Young home in Bad Nation and a club was organized which was known as the K. Y. N. (know your neighbor) club. Most of the charter members have passed on and the club doesn't hold meetings now. They helped wherever they could in sickness, fires and many civic causes besides the social part. The good times we had together will never be forgotten.

Glen Sherwoods at the White River Hydro-Electric Plant, 1926.



Tornado of June 1925. Junior, Evelyn and Mr. Glen Sherwood; Earl Brown on roof.

Bad Nation Township was organized and officers appointed until our regular election could be held. I was the first elected Justice of the Peace. During the many years that I held that office, I helped settle many suits for trespass and damage, all peaceably without court trial. On November 28, 1922, I united in marriage Robert Jackson and Charlotte Voelker at a large and beautiful wedding in the Ed Jackson home. They are now grandparents, residing in Murdo, S. D. A reception and dance was held there that night for Mr. and Mrs. Robert Jackson and Mr. and Mrs. Jesse DuBray (Robert's sister Mary).

During the drouth years the depression took our cattle and much of our land, leaving us eight cows, a bull and one weak calf. But we persisted; with the coming of better crops and prices, by 1944 we decided we could have a modern home. Preparations were begun in the fall, but again tragedy struck. In April 1945, Glen was rushed to Pierre for an emergency operation which was successful. Then in May and July, three tornadoes hit. They destroyed buildings, killed sheep, pigs and chickens and took the roof off of Junior's house. In August of that year, I entered the Pierre Hospital and had surgery, on September 4th. On Sep-

**Beulah Kemmitz Till (with beautiful long hair) and her uncle, Harry Larsen.**

tember 6th, Glen was killed in a tractor accident. Junior was married and had two little boys so he took over the place and I moved to Wood, S. D.

In 1952, I married Harry Larsen who homesteaded near us, and we now reside in Wood, S. D. About four years ago, I became a Great grandmother. My own mother was still living at that time.

### "PROVING UP"

**Notice For Publication.**

Department of the Interior.
U. S. Land Office at Gregory, South Dakota.
Sept. 12, 1913

Notice is hereby given that Henry L. Jarboe, of Wood, S. D., who, on October 29, 1912, made Homestead Entry serial No. Gregory 07991-Chamberlain 07018, for Lots 1, 2 and E ½ N W ¼, Section 19, Township 41, N. Range 27W, 8th Principal Meridian, has filed notice of intention to make final three-year proof to establish claim to the land above described, before Frank Mullen, U. S. Commissioner, at his office in Wood, S. D., on the 20 day of October, 1913.

Claimant names as witnesses: Charles W. Kerlin, Fritz Lyon, G. L. Watson, Bert Hancock, all of Wood, South Dakota.

Proof made under act June 6, 1912.

32-5 T. C. BURNS, Register.

—Mellette County Pioneer, 1913

# Homesteaders Near Farley, S. D.

By Mrs. Leslie Leek

In the fall of 1912 Leslie Leek, accompanied by a cousin, left his home in Pierson, Iowa, in a covered wagon to establish residence on his claim in Mellette County. It was the SW 35 44-31. They built a shack on the land while here and then returned to Iowa.

In May 1913 he arrived in Okaton on a R. R. car. Then began the task of unloading and moving his possessions to Mellette County. His claim was five miles from the Farley Post Office.

In the homesteading days the neighbors usually all got together at least once a week.

I am enclosing a picture of the Farley store and Post Office. Sunday School was also held there. Mr. Farley is standing in the doorway; he was Commissioner from this District.

I believe this picture was taken about 1913, perhaps earlier. I am not sure about the date of the first Farley Post Office as I wasn't here and there is no one left to ask.

In late 1915 the Farley Post Office was moved farther west. It was not long before the residents in this part of the county wanted a post office closer. So the Schamber Post Office came into being in 1919 on the same site as the Farley Post Office had been. This post office remained for a number of years then it, too, changed locations and postmasters. It was closed on July 1, 1934. It was then located on SW 25 44-31 where it had been moved to in 1926.

(For all Mellette County Ghost Post Office information, as supplied by records in the archives at Washington, D. C., see my Book, "Mellette County Memories." Winifred Reutter.)

**Neighborhood gathering, 1916.** From left to right: Leslie Leek, Myres Rickards, Levi Leek, John Erickson, Mrs. Levi Leek, Mrs. Ruby Rickards' son and mother, Mrs. Guy Geiman, Guy Geiman.

Leslie Leek at Wheeler Crossing, enroute to South Dakota.

Leek Homestead Shack, 1912

**Farley Sunday School (Farley P. O. and Store).** Clarence Farley by door; Mrs. Farley is second woman from left, seated. His sister-in-law is fourth, same row.

# Clara Leusman's Story

**By Mrs. Henry (Clara Wolf) Leusman**

In April 1915, I, Clara Wolf, age 12, left Nebraska. My parents were Chris and Rose Wolf. We came to Mellette County, S. D. My father and brother, Bill, came ahead. They shipped a carload of cattle, machinery, a few work horses and two saddle ponies to Murdo, S. D. From there they had to drive our cattle and horses through wet snow and rain the twenty two miles to reach their new home.

My mother, with seven children, stayed back six weeks while they coughed it out with a case of whooping cough in the family. Then we followed my father to Dakota. We moved into a small four room house where the ten of us lived for ten years.

When we were settled and wanted to start breaking the prairie we found out that our horses were unable to work, due to the change of climate and exposure in a cold, wet spring.

My father went to a public sale many miles away and bought a bull intending to hitch him with the one we brought from Nebraska. He also made a harness and yoke for them. Then he and my mother were ready to try to break a team of oxen to work. They hitched them to a plow and tried to break some sod. I was only 12 years old but I still remember what a terrible job they had. Just feature two people trying to make those two bulls walk together and pull a plow in a straight line. After many hard tries they finally were able to plow some ground. The prairie was tough so it took quite a bit of time to plow even a small field. Corn was then planted with a small hand planter.

Our post office was five miles away. Cody Sinning was the postmaster. He did a good job. Best of all he married a very nice school teacher from Milwaukee, Wisc. He made her love his Dakota home so well that Cody and Alice still live on the same place. Uncle Sam discontinued the postoffice in later years.

We lived on what was called the Rosebud Indian Reservation. Much of the land was owned by the Indians in 1915, with many of the Indians living on their own land and owning cattle which were running loose on these plains. Alex Bordeaux was considered a rich Indian as he had several hundred head of cattle and horses. I also remember Black Wolf, Fast Horse, Yellow Eagle and Dick Mouse. Yellow Robe and Dick Mouse, with their families, lived within ten miles of us. Some of the Indians lived in log cabins they had built but many lived in tents the year around.

The Government built a large school at Rosebud, S. D. Also there were several other Indian Day Schools located in Mellette County. The Indian parents would bring their children to the schools in the fall and leave them there at a boarding house until school was let out in the spring.

My folks also leased many acres of Indian owned land. We had no fences to keep our cattle on the land we rented. So father said, and I quote, "Clara, you can learn to ride the pony and herd the cattle for me this summer." I was only 12 years old and not strong enough to help much in the field. My brother, Bill, and sister, Gertrude, were both older than I and helped make hay in large stacks from the native prairie grass. The horses were willing to work by that time. Hay was put up in those days by hand power and horse power and farming was not mechanized like it is now.

**Clara Wolf Leusman, 1919, ready to work in the field.**

I became my father's cowgirl, that was my summer job for three years. After roaming and grazing on the prairie all day our cattle would bed down at night near our house. We had no corrals for them at first. At daylight, I saddled my pony and away we would go with the herd. We would follow them all day long and watched that they did not get mixed with other stock that were loose on the plains. In the evening we kept them out until dark, then brought them in for the night.

Several coyotes raised their families in the surrounding hills. I would sit on my pony and listen each evening for the coyotes twilight call. They have a shrill lonesome call and it gave me a thrill to listen to them. I loved those long twilight evenings.

Round-up time in September was very interesting. Cowboys would gather all the cattle they could find, take them to one place, sort them, putting the owner's brand on each calf. The Government did this also with the Indian cattle and horses.

About this time our homestead neighbors and my father decided we youngsters must go to school. Father and Charley Kimball, Uncle John Steiner, Jim Paleck, Mr. Brooks and a few others went to White River, our county seat, to discuss building a school house. I believe Fred Egleston was one of the carpenters. With his help the school and a small horse barn were soon built. School barns were common in those days because many children who lived quite a distance away rode horses to school. Our first teacher was Selby Gallagher who was just a kid himself. He would ride a horse from home, a distance of about 12 miles each morning. Many times we gave him up for lost when he failed to be there to call the roll at nine o'clock. We would build a fire in the stove, then wait and watch. Finally here he would come, galloping up the road, his horse wet with lather.

We would all yell to him, "What's the excuse?" His answer always was, "I had to help my Dad load hogs." We decided his dad sure sold lots of hogs that winter. My teachers in other school years were Theron Brodball, Mrs. C. Brooks and Elmer Zickrick. After I was out of school one of the teachers was Mrs. Arthur Siegmund.

On April 16, 1922, Henry Leusman and I were married. We had a double wedding with my sister, Gertrude, who married Louie Thompson. Pastor Salters from Wood came up and performed the ceremony. It was Easter Sunday and it rained all day.

In the evening, here came the charivariers to our home. They had the usual noisemakers, shotguns to shoot, dish pans to pound on and cowbells to ring. In the excitement someone shot holes through my father's eavestroughs which he had put around our house to catch the rain water for household use. The next day father spent all day soldering the eavestroughs and was very unhappy.

Henry and his father, Fred Leusman and family, came to South Dakota in the fall of 1914 from Daykrin, Nebr. They drove from Nebraska to Dakota with a covered wagon. They had a team of mules hitched to it. Their hayrack, loaded with machinery, was drawn by horses. About 20 head of cattle were following the wagon. It took them about three weeks to make the trip. They settled near the little Badlands. They came out to homestead in 1913, but did not go out to live there until the fall of 1914. Ed Taylor, a son-in-law, brought a well drilling machine along to drill wells. They started drilling as soon as they arrived there but had bad luck and didn't find any water. So the family had to go a distance of some three miles to the Little White River and haul all their water in barrels.

Other homesteaders who were already around there east of the Little Badlands, by 1913 were Fred and Will Egleston, Gus Gunner, John Smith and John Sauers. Guy Hutchinson homesteaded west of the Little Badlands.

Many of these homes and families that I have mentioned are now gone and their land is prairie again. Many have moved to other states.

My new homestead home was 11 miles north of the Paleck school along the Big White River. Henry proved up in the year of 1919 and built a 14 x 16 shack on it. It was our Home Sweet Home for eight years until we were able to get Shorty Scull to help build a front room and a bedroom on for us. We needed the room as we were looking forward to a little bundle of happiness in our home.

At that time we raised ducks and geese. We plucked their feathers for pillows and feather beds. So I traded Shorty Scull a feather bed for his labor on our house. Times were hard, and money—what was that?

Nick Hurst lived across the river on the north, George Brunskill and family to the east. They both had a lot of cattle. Martin Johnson and wife lived farther down the river. He, too, had many cattle and sheep. They were old settlers. Our side of the river was soon settled with young couples moving in, mostly from Nebraska. As I remember it, Charlie Swift and wife were the first couple on the flat, or as we called it, the river bench.

Soon other families followed: Harrisons, Robert Jones and wife, and the Hill family. Soon their little kids were ready for school, so school problems confronted us again in 1923.

The neighbors all went together and the county officials told us, "We will furnish the material if you people will furnish the labor to build the school house." It was soon built with lots of good and willing workers. When finished, the men called a meeting and named it "Prosperity School." The flat, level prairie around there is still called "Prosperity Flats."

Dancing was our main source of entertainment and we sure did initiate our new school house. I enjoyed those good old days when everybody was poor and happy. No radios, no T. V.s, no phones, and no water in our homes. We washed our clothes with tub, wash board and stomper. We sawed our wood for fuel with a hand saw. Our lights were kerosene lamps. Timber grew on the river bottom where we lived so that is where we gathered our fuel, most of the people had to buy coal.

**Krogmans, Jones, Wolfs, and Leusmans. Cabin they built, log front and dug-in; lived there three years during drouth of 1930-33 and ran cattle together, south of White River.**

As the years swiftly passed by many things were added to our homes. We were blessed with good crops until the drouth years hit from 1930 to 1935. The grasshoppers moved in with the drouth and ate what little we raised and it seemed the rains had forsaken us. Then many people bid their homesteads good-bye. They moved to neighboring states in hopes of making a better living. We came to Idaho, and we are living there now.

There is always a silver lining on the dark clouds shining and as these few lines go into this book we Especially to the old pioneers and the new people living wish you all God's many blessings wherever you live. in Mellette County.

# Homestead Days Near Farley, S. D.

**By Mrs. Earl L. Liggett**

We came to South Dakota in the year 1909, lived in Gregory, S. D., and had a general store for a while. In May 1914, we bought a relinquishment from an Eastern doctor and moved to a homestead in Mellette County.

Our first home on the homestead was a one room house and we were lucky to have one room finished. This house looked like a doll house and we decided afterwards we should have furnished it with doll sized furniture.

Later on we bought a two room house from a homesteader and did the work ourselves until we really had a nice home built. We made the yard gate out of a bundle of lath, hauled gravel and stones to make a nice walk to the road. We bought a lot of mixed paints which a storekeeper in Stamford had left over. He made us such a good price, we thought we could take a chance on it. We mixed the paint all together and luck was with us all the way, we had a color of bluegrey. We trimmed the corners and windows in white, this made us a cute little four room house with a screened-in porch. We were very happy.

We had a nice garden. Here we planted trees, rose bushes and vegetables. Out of our garden we filled our cellar full of vegetables that I canned. We had fresh and canned rhubarb from our 12 plants. When my yellow bushes began to bloom, the Indians going along the road would stop and touch them to see if they were real.

At this time we had three cows, twelve chickens and a team of horses to make a living for the four of us. Having a good garden was all that saved the day.

We had Indian neighbors whom I thought were very nice to us, Maggie White Horse and Mr. and Mrs. Wentworth.

We had two children ready for school. The men got together and built a school house out of logs. We were

**First Farley School, Miss Bessie Gapen, teacher. Pupils: Harbaugh, Liggett, Schamber, Bass, White Horse children, and Farley girl.**

Earl L. Liggett homestead, and cattle on the open range in the foreground.

lucky to get a teacher though she had to teach on a permit. Every two weeks we had Literary Society at the school house. Several good subjects were chosen for debate and we really had the folks who could debate well. After the program a lunch followed. Then of course, we had to have a clown in the bunch, who could think of so many amusing things. Also a paper was read including the news and pranks played by the jolly bunch.

We had a little country store and post office one-half mile away. With the help of a minister who preached at the little town of Stamford, S. D., we organized a nice little Sunday School. The neighbors were very much interested and thus we had a large attendance.

At Farley Store, first Thanksgiving gathering. Farleys, Liggetts, Bucholz, Harbaugh families, John Erickson, Harry Farley, Irah Krogman, and Guen Liggett.

As I came from the East, the state of Ohio, the Presbyterian Church there, donated to us, 12 Winona song books which we prized very much. I can still truly say we appreciated their gift to us.

Now this little store of Farley with the post office had quite a time getting their supplies. These came from the town of Stamford using the Rocky Ford crossing which at that time had no bridge. The Big White River gets quite high at times. Sometimes, when it was not to high, we could drive a team across. There were times when the river got too high to cross with the horses and wagon so a steel water tank was used for a boat and the men paddled across.

The roads were prairie trails, we just crossed the creeks wherever possible.

Our homestead consisted of 160 acres. Our first crop was thirty acres of corn. We had a good crop of corn and sold it for $1.25 per bushel. We sold early potatoes at $1.80 per bushel. This looked wonderful to us, coming from a town where we could not find enough work to make a living. In fact, we were encouraged so much that we rented a half section of land from a neighbor and bought a new tractor. It was a Fordson which at that time was so hard to get started that they spent much of the time cranking the thing. They had to work early and late getting our sod broke up. To those of you who don't know what I mean by breaking sod it simply means, plowing, turning our prairie grass over and under. Our planted corn came up lovely, got about 18 inches high, then we had a hail storm that cleaned the entire field. Just little marks to show where the rows had been.

Our money was getting scarce at this time but we needed to build a hen house, and as our neighbors all had what they called sod houses, we thought why not build a sod chicken house. So we got busy and built us a sod chicken coop and were real proud of it until the thing collapsed. The chunks of sod had been frozen when cut and laid. Later on they began to thaw out and the sod we had placed so carefully fell apart and the building crumbled. This had to happen at eleven o'clock at night. We of course thought someone was taking our chickens as there were chickens flying everywhere and some of them were buried under the crumbled sod. We hurried out, and did we have a job! We had to break the Sabbath day fixing a shelter for the chickens that were left.

We had a number of bad years. Hail, drouth and grasshoppers. I really don't know which year was the worst of the 1930s, 1930 - 31 - 32 - 33!

Mr. Liggett was always interested in farming and farm reports. When the AAA farm program was organized he was elected third man in the set up in our county. Later he was elected county chairman and served for ten years. I would like to say, in my opinion, this was the wisest thing the Government has done for the farmers. They had seed and feed loans to pay and many were nearly to their wit's end. The building of dams also brought abundant water and moisture to our county. And we are not forgetting our crop payments and our government granaries for storage of our grain. The Lord has been so good to help us when we needed it so much to feed our country and in helping others who are in need.

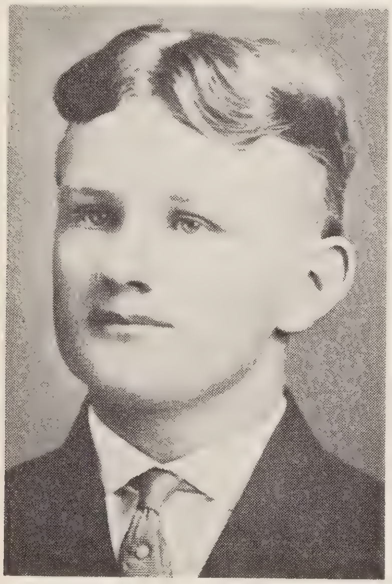
We raised three children and they are in homes of their own. So we drift along in the march of time, over the hills of prosperity and down in the valleys of depression. Swayed by mass psychology, bound together by patriotism while the fighting was on; with business and industry sapping the economic life, sometimes by fraud. We become so blinded by suspicion, so desperate that we refuse the leadership of real leaders and follow false prophets. We of course, can think of some of my favorite quotations that I am including and dedicate to those who read my story: Be calm, be cheerful, be independent and banish hurry and worry....Everyone who does anything makes mistakes, it is better to make a mistake than to refuse to come to a decision.

# Mellette County — October 1911 to June 1930

**By F. E. Lyons**

I sit and reminisce about the good old days in Mellette County: Where the coyotes howled, the rattlesnakes rattled, the Indians pow-wowed, prairie fires raged, cross-country trails were the highways and blood ran hot with youth. There was plenty of time, for town on Saturdays, Sunday School on Sundays, and basket suppers in between. How can I help but have a twinkle in my eye and a small pain in my heart, for those were the good old days!

On October 24, 1911, at Gregory, I drew a number for my homestead in Mellette County.



**Fritz Lyons**
(Picture from Kerlin)

In the spring of 1912, a cold, wild wind was blowing, when Art Mountain and I unloaded my single top buggy, a large trunk, a big box, and many small necessary items from a railroad car in Winner. I harnessed the new pony and started for the wilds of Mellette County with the buggy piled high! The first night of the trip was spent at the I. T. Stone Hotel in Carter. Traveling all the next day, March 15, I arrived at my homestead five miles northwest of Wood, at dusk. I unloaded my top buggy, pitched the tent, and rolled up on the hard ground in my bed roll with my head leaning down hill like a green-horned homesteader. In the middle of the night a million coyotes began to howl! Cold chills ran up and down my spine, and I was scared! I wasn't used to that kind of lonely life, just coming from Omaha, Nebr., where I had been working. The Union Shops were noisy, but that was entirely different. Then all the world was silent again. It was impossible to know how long I slept, but suddenly, I was awakened by a great thundering of cattle racing by, followed by wild cowboys whooping and hollering. Since it was pitch dark, I couldn't see a thing, but I hoped they could, as everything I owned was right in the path of those senseless critters. Some how we survived, and I wasn't sorry to see the dawn. Incidently, that was the last big cattle round-up to be held in Mellette County.

Water was so important in the early days, and I began to realize it in the morning, so I built a stone boat at a neighboring homesteader's, Brownie Kreene, borrowed his horse and set off for a spring five miles away, with a 50 gallon barrel. There was less than a half barrel left when I got home at dusk. Not long after, a report came that the Indians were on the warpath and were going to attack during the night to drive out the white settlers. None of the Indians came.

Proving up had to begin at once, so I drove to Wood and bought all my supplies to build a 10 x 12 shack, at the Von Seggern Bros. and Utz Lumber Company. Von Brisco delivered it to my homestead. The tarpaper shack, banked up with sod, became my palace, coal bin, and store house all in one. Soon after, I hired Mr. Weininger to drill my well. He got good water at about 50 feet.

My claim was established now, so I decided to fulfill a secret ambition that had long been a dream. I began to buy cattle. The salt grass was good feed and there was plenty of it. Prospects were good if we could keep the Indians from stealing the cattle, and the prairie fires from burning the grass and hay. By now, my homestead had grown into a ranch and was known by the name, "909 Ranch." My brand was connected reverse F L on left hip. I often wonder who bought my brand as it was registered in my name.

Prairie fires raged in the fall. One year, I put up 200 tons of hay to feed the three carloads of cows shipped in from Omaha, plus 250 head on the ranch. My hay crew was just finished with the job Saturday night and by 4:00 o'clock in the morning, all but 80 loads of the hay lay in smoldering ruins.

Rattlesnakes also were plentiful. We were always killing them. I tanned many of their hides and now have a large display of skins and rattles at the Adams Memorial Museum in Deadwood, S. D., from the early days.

**Fritz Lyons Shack, 1912**

Fritz Lyons and Cattle, 1913

Nothing like these hardships kept the homesteaders from progress. We had our fun, too. There were such amusements as going to town on Saturdays, Sunday School and church services on Sundays, box socials, parties, dances, dinners and big county picnics that the Homesteaders Association held each June. There was always plenty of good food around and good cooks. We bachelors bought bread from Mrs. Kauffman for 10 cents a loaf and got all the other groceries from the mercantile stores. I batched for eight years and got a lot of experience cooking for haying crews, also cowboys who were branding cattle and dehorning steers.

The second Thanksgiving I spent in Mellette County, a bachelors dinner was held on my ranch with all the trimmings.

The horses were wild and had to be "broke." That was my hobby—breaking, riding, and driving wild horses. One haying season on the A. K. Wood Ranch, I helped break many, many broncs, driving four or five miles across the prairie to the hay loader with four abreast. Talk about wild rides! One ride I'll never forget was given to me by a bronc owned by Jack Williams of Wood. I had stopped at the court house in White River when I noticed this horse Jack had tied to a telephone pole. During the conversation, he asked if I'd like a ride. Naturally I would! When I staggered off—rubbing my charlie-horses—I told Jack that horse had all the gaits in the book! He laughed and said he thought that horse could never be ridden so he was taking him to Cheyenne for the rodeo. Kind of a sneaky trick, don't you think?

In September of 1913, the first County Fair in Wood took place. One year the homesteaders baled hay and hauled it to Wood. There they built a large baled hay pavilion to display the entries. Displays were entered from the entire county, so I decided to enter some of my specialties. To everyone's surprise, my mince pie and fudge took first prize! When the Fair was over the baled hay was auctioned off to the highest bidder, and I bought it all—50 tons at $4.50 per ton.

We have in our possession quite a number of newspapers published by Fred Kirch of the "Mellette County Pioneer" at Wood. You may be interested in several dated and news items, including the first county fair, commissioner proceedings, Indian wedding, early homesteader's activities. I sincerely hope these accounts will be of interest in recalling the history of homesteading during the early days of Mellette County.

* * *

## THE MELLETTE COUNTY PIONEER

**Published By Fred C. Kirch**

**Subscription $1.50**

Entered as second class mail matter at Wood, S. D., March 23, 1912, under act of March 3, 1879.

**November 14, 1913**

Last week F. C. Kirch of the Wood "Pioneer," completed his first year at the helm of that publication, and that he has been putting out a creditable edition the past year is an undisputable fact. Here's wishing for him a successful second year.—Murdo Coyote.

* * *

**September 12, 1913**

The first annual Mellette County Fair, which was held in Wood last Thursday, Friday, and Saturday

County Fair at Wood (Glatfelter Picture) was a grand success in every particular. The display would have been a credit to any county in a much older and better developed country, regardless of where they reside, they have cause to be proud of the showing made at the first fair held in Wood. In the Ladies Department, there were 144 entries of exhibits made, and they made an excellent showing in fine needlework, pastry, jelly, etc., but they had to take a back seat when it came to pumpkin pie, and allowed a bachelor homesteader to walk off with first prize, and another homesteader walked off with first prize on candy and mince pie. The Ladies Department was one of great interest.

Home Department:
Pumpkin pie, C. W. Kerlin, 1st
Mince pie, Fritz Lyon, 1st
Plum jelly, Mrs. D. G. Miller, 1st
Buffalo Berry jelly, Mrs. G. B. Moore, 1st

Fancy Work Department:
Hardanger lace, Mrs. G. L. Watson, 1st
Crochet lace, Mrs. J. T. Hocking, 1st

In the Farm Products and Garden Department, 332 entries were made and it was a most magnificent showing of what the fertile soil of Mellette County will produce if given half a show. Several Indians also exhibited their products in this department and walked off with a nice lot of prizes and blue ribbons.

Apple display from Orchard Ranch called forth many favorable comments. C. W. Kerlin had on exhibition a stalk of cotton that had several good bolls.

G. B. Moore had some buckwheat and castor beans on exhibition.
10 ears of Flint corn, H. G. Day, 1st
Citron, J. B. Mitchell, 1st
Hubbard squash, Joe Garneaux
Popcorn, A. J. Bailey, 1st
Radish, C. W. Kerlin, 1st
Turnips, J. E. Renwick, 1st

Miss Grace Brown (Uncle Rufus) was awarded a blue ribbon for the most artistic display of native grass and shrubs.

C. W. Kerlin had the largest number of entries made by a single exhibitor, having made 40 entries.

Friday, there was a baby show at the fair. There were 11 entries and both first and second prizes in this show were won by babies from the Rosebud Valley. Martha Elizabeth Williams won first and little Clarence Abrahams won second.

Stands and Looks Back, or "Scoop," one of the old long haired Indians who is past sixty years old, had some potatoes, carrots, squaw corn and beans of his own raising on exhibit at the fair last week and he was awarded second prize on carrots and a blue ribbon on his beans. Scoop has good reason to feel proud of his accomplishments in the garden line. C. W. Kerlin's exhibit of rattlesnake skins was much appreciated by those who visited the exhibit building.

* * *

### September 12, 1913

## COMMISSIONER PROCEEDINGS

September 5, 9 a. m. Board met as per adjournment. Members present: McLane, Farley, Siegmund. On motion following claims allowed:

| | |
|---|---|
| Jander Big Crow, mileage & per diem as juror, | 7.50 |
| Ed Estes, same | 9.10 |
| Walt Simms, same | 7.50 |
| J. B. Mitchell, same | 8.60 |
| C. E. Kell, salary for August | 50.00 |
| C. F. Manson, same | 11.66 |
| W. E. Hollenback, same | 80.23 |
| C. S. Hight, deputy clerk of court | 31.20 |

Board adjourned until 1 p. m.
D. L. McLane, Chairman
F. J. Cummings, Auditor.
(Commissioner Quick Bear was absent.)

* * *

### November 28, 1913

## INDIAN WEDDING

Edgar Menard and Miss Agnes White Eagle were happily united in marriage last Thursday morning. The ceremony was performed in the Catholic Church west of Wood. A large number of invited guests were present, both Indians and whites.

The bride wore a long bridal veil and was tastily dressed in a gown of tan silk with shoes to match. The groom wore a suit of blue serge. The beautiful ring ceremony was used.

After receiving congratulations of their many friends all repaired to the church yard where the priest took a photograph of the company. The bridal party then rode to the home of the grandfather, Louie Menard, in a carriage which was decorated for the occasion with streamers of red and yellow crepe paper.

A bountiful dinner was served after which we attended the Indian dance where hundreds of yards of dress goods of many kinds and colors was given to the Indians, after which dinner was served to them camp style. In the evening a dance in the house was given for the young folks who made merry till the small hours.

This was a new experience for many of us and we take this opportunity to thank Mr. Menard for his hospitality. We would also remember the faithful women who prepared the meal. To the bride and groom, Mr. and Mrs. Menard, we extend sincere wishes for a long life of happiness and prosperity.

Mrs. John Hauer baked sixty loaves of bread and the wedding cake for the Menard-White Eagle wedding which occurred last week.

**Indian wedding near Wood; Edgar Menard and Agnes White Eagle, 1913.**

* * *

### Homesteaders Activities from Various Communities:

Cody Chopsticks—Nov. 22, 1913

Will Eglestons are enlarging their residence.

Fred Eglestons are laying a floor in their dwelling.

John Schmidt has purchased a new pup.

W. J. Egleston hauled the first hog to the Cody stockyards.

Leo Leigerot is home again after spending a few weeks at Gregory and other points.

Mellette County Homesteaders Ass'n Picnic - June 18, 1913

Mrs. Clara Byrne, of Burnsville Heights, has proved up and left last Tuesday.

The Cody Literary Society had a successful meeting last Friday, Nov. 21. There were about 40 present. Those taking part in the program were: W. J. Egleston, Miss Sara Husk, Mr. Peters, Miss Stern, F. B. Egleston, and Gus Gunner.

* * *

Butte Valley Items—Nov. 28, 1913

Tom and Miss Mae Richardson, Alferd Magnuson, Ed Albers and Miss Daly were in Carter Saturday.

Alta St. Clair, Mr. Peterson, Mr. Bigler and Mr. Daly were callers at Rose Blossom Ranch, Saturday.

Jack Williams called at Petersons Friday night.

Rev. Keepers and wife were supper guests at W. H. Hedrick's Sunday evening.

* * *

Pure Water District—Nov. 25, 1913

Miss Grace Brown was a week-end guest at the Gallagher home.

Jim Mitchell has finished shucking his immense crop of corn. Jim says the rush is over now for 1913.

Frank Paseka, who lives northeast of Wood, purchased a load of potatoes from Geo. Schanbacher last Friday.

Miss Brown entertained the Minister and Mrs. Van Valkenburgh Sunday evening.

School opened Monday morning, September 8th, at the Gary place; Mr. Sime Fridy as teacher.

Mr. Pearsall returned to his home at Lynch, Nebr., last Thursday morning via auto stage to Winner.

Roy Hodges of White River spent Tuesday evening with John Glatfelter.

Noah Gerig left for Winner Sunday, where he has employment on one of the papers there.

* * *

Rosebud Valley Notes—Nov. 28, 1913

Mr. and Mrs. Joneschiet called at Abraham's Tuesday afternoon.

Julius Hasche purchased a load of corn of Mr. Fennel, Wednesday.

Jim Bad Hand returned Wednesday from Deadwood, S. D., where he has been attending U. S. court.

Mr. Sherwood says the vines are there but where are the spuds. He now owns a new disc and is preparing for next year's crop.

Mr. Iron Shooter reports a fine soft water well on his place east of Miss Teeney's.

Mrs. Cousins and daughter Thelma, Miss Teeney and Miss Gammon spent Sunday with Mr. and Mrs. Brown.

* * *

Sunny Side Items—Nov. 14, 1913

Mr. Jim Orr and wife were in Wood Monday. Mrs. Henry and Mr. Anderson were also in Wood Monday.

Mrs. Juzek, Mrs. Henry and Martin Juzek called at R. E. Andersons Thursday.

Two big prairie fires were raging near here Thursday. One south and the other west. The one west of us burned all day.

Mr. Weed has a new pinto pony.

Mr. Orr and Chas. Schaeffer are picking their corn.

* * *

Kiser Creek Items—Nov. 14, 1913

Mr. and Mrs. John Zickrick autoed to the Springer home last Sunday.

Richard Jones and wife called at the Jim Judson and Springer Brothers homes last Monday.

J. J. Steiner lost one of his milch cows Monday night, bit by a rattler.

Mat Gillen drove down to Fred Lewis' home Monday to get a couple of scrapers to dig a barn.

Art Zickrick visited the Rise, Gillen and Springer homes last Tuesday.

* * *

Happy Hollow—Nov. 25, 1913

Pete Peterson has been enlarging his den.

Last Wednesday 56 of Mr. and Mrs. Herman Mohrs friends spent the afternoon and evening with them. A most enjoyable time was had by all.

Miss Parish of Toledo has been visiting in Happy Hollow, the guest of Miss Brown and Mrs. Gallagher.

* * *

Local Items—Nov. 14, 1913

Bert Humphrey, who has been working at the Green Livery Barn for some time past, has resigned his position and will now do freighting between here and Winner. He expects to make regular trips.

Arthur C. Howlett, who is a homesteader near White River, and who has been employed on the Winner Journal for several months past, last week purchased the Mellette County News, published at White River.

Mr. Freeman, who has been driving the mail stage between here and Carter for some time past, has resigned and is now putting in most of his time on his homestead northeast of town. Wm. McCabe is now driving the Carter Stage.

The news came to town Saturday evening that County Commissioner, D. L. McLane's barn at White River, was destroyed by fire last Saturday. We did not learn the origin of the fire nor the extent of the loss.

A report came to town Monday morning that Mrs. Alfred Night Pipe, who lives near Oak Creek, had committed suicide by hanging, on last Sunday.

Last Saturday 23 cars of Mellette County cattle were shipped from Murdo over the Milwaukee to the Sioux City market. This shipment consisted of LTD cattle and several cars of cattle belonging to white ranchers in the northern part of the county. All stock marketed at the big eastern market have to be driven from 25 to 45 miles before they can be loaded on the railroad cars for shipment.

Chas. Ray who lives in the Kiser Creek neighborhood, was in town Monday and while here informed us that he was milking 4 cows that have averaged him an income of $2.50 per head each month for the year, besides furnishing his family all the dairy products they used, with no extra care.

The Indians have been gathering in this week to be here for the payment which is billed for tomorrow morning, Nov. 22.

Frank Tisdell, who is running a barber shop at Carter, visited with his family on the claim a few days.

County School Superintendent Thos. H. Green this week moved his residence from the rear of the Wood Hardware Co's. store to the Weininger lot.

W. E. Dean has purchased a Ford car and is now using it to carry the mail between here and Carter.

We were out auto riding in company with G. L. Watson, Sunday, and in our travels we visited the J. L. Scull homestead southeast of town about six miles. Mr. Scull has one of the most novel and unique houses on his homestead to be found in Mellette County. On the buttes near his home are to be found some very peculiar stones, of a greenish hue and composed of thousands of small pebbles, and Mr. Scull has gathered these and used them in the construction of a home.

# The Field Matrons or Indian Nurses of the Rosebud

### As Told To Winifred Reutter

During the homestead days, Mellette County had many Indian residents. This had been their native homeland as far back as they could remember. Now that the Government had decided to let the Whites homestead in this area, the Indians were supposed to live on their allotted lands. Prior to this time, the Government had set up Day Schools for the Indian children where they were taught to read and write English as well as sewing and shop work, besides other useful things.

The Government also had a number of Issue Stations located on the Indian Reservation. The head man at each place was called the Boss Farmer. He was in charge of issuing beef, wagons, payment checks, rations or whatever else the Government decided to issue to the Indians in his territory. Also he was supposed to help them with their problems and look after them in general.

Near each Issue Station there was usually a field matron's cottage and in it lived a government nurse. Her job was to care for the sick Indians and to teach them health care and sanitation. There were many such dedicated women who served their nurse's calling, far beyond the call of duty. They also gave freely of their help to the homesteaders, when doctors were few and far between, especially in childbirth cases, serious illnesses or accidents.

They all deserve special credit. But I am going to tell a little I have learned about one of them (of the early pioneer days), whom I met personally.

Her Indian name was "Wingan Omani," which I suppose meant nurse. And this was the deserving title given by the Indians in Mellette County to the late Mrs. P. C. McDonald of Wood, S. D. In 1905 she came to South Dakota, to work as an assistant matron in the Indian Day School at Fort Thompson on the Crow Creek Reservation.

In 1909 she was promoted to field matron and transferred to the Rosebud Reservation. At first she lived in a government cottage a half mile south of the Butte Creek Day School. Later she lived in the house near the Indian Day School (after it was closed) until her retirement from government services on October 1, 1935.

She served as a field matron in the area around

**Mr. and Mrs. Pat McDonald on their wedding day, 1918. Ida McDonald, government field nurse, stationed at Wood, S. D., 1909-1935. A faithful friend in time of need to Indians and Whites alike. She is gone but the memory of her unselfish faithfulness to duty is not forgotten. One of the many courageous Florence Nightengale's of the early days.**

Wood, S. D., for 26 years. In the early days it was common sight to see her top buggy with its team of white horses, traveling to someone who needed her. No matter how dark the night, in storms or even in blizzards, she was always ready to respond to the call of suffering humanity.

I did not have the opportunity to know her in those early years but her many friends and patients, both Indian and Whites, tell many stories of her wonderful devotion to duty so I will repeat some of the information here that has been given to me.

This nurse of the Mellette County prairie was born at Farwell, Minn., on September 16, 1879. She was married to William Bonga on July 2nd, 1901. They had one son, Harry, who lives in Minnesota. On February 21, 1918, she was united in marriage to Patrick C. McDonald of Wood, S. D. After retirement in 1935 she became ill and her final years were filled with suffering and pain. She became a cancer victim on July 31, 1939.

Besides Harry, she left a step-son, Lee McDonald of Wood, and a step-grandson, Pat McDonald now of Charles City, Iowa. Her husband, P. C. McDonald, passed away in March 1946.

The Butte Creek field matron's day began with an early and very substantial breakfast. Often this meal was the only one she had until she returned at night. She especially enjoyed several cups of coffee with each meal. Sometimes, her grateful patient or their family, offered her a welcome cup of coffee. Often homesteaders would put the coffee pot on, and invite her in, when she was going by. An important duty after breakfast was to fill, trim and clean the many kerosene lamps which she always kept ready in case extra lights were needed in an emergency. Another emergency measure was keeping a large cupboard drawer filled with clean white cloths. These were made sterile by pressing with a heated sad iron or by baking in the oven. Packages of home-made sterile bandages were taken with her to be used to bind up broken bones or injuries. She carried a small leather satchel. It was filled with first-aid drugs and medical items. One room of her cottage was filled with drugs sent out by the Indian Department at Washington to be dispensed to the Indian patients as the need arose. There were salves, castor oil, iodine and other medicine. No wonder drugs such as we have today. A special, white, castile soap was sent to her, in large wooden boxes. This soap was distributed to the Indians and proved to be very useful in sanitation and caring for their families.

She was with many women, both Indian and White, during childbirth. Very few women had their babies in the hospital at that time. Consequently, she was called upon quite often. One of her memorable experiences was in a tent during zero weather. At that time she took care of an Indian mother who brought twins into the world. The tent was banked with snow, but there was a wood burner stove with a stove pipe stuck through the top of the tent. On this stove was heated the boiling water she required. Both babies survived the ordeal in excellent fashion.

When she married Pat McDonald at Wood, he owned an automobile, so he could drive her from place to place and that was the end of her horse and buggy days. Her work also became easier when Butte Creek Station was fortunate enough to have a resident doctor. Whenever there was a shortage of help, like during an epidemic or other emergency, she was called to the Rosebud Government hospital at Rosebud, S. D., for active duty as a nurse there.

Mrs. McDonald had several hobbies, including crocheting and knitting. Her fingers were busy as she watched over a pneumonia patient who might be recovering in her home. Her hands were never idle, they were strong and very capable. Her home always included a cat, who would usually be dozing in front of the hard coal heater on cold days. One of her pets, a white dog, "Midgy," enjoyed an especially long life and often accompanied her on her tours of duty.

Ida McDonald made a lasting contribution to the welfare of both Whites and Indians during the many years she served in the Wood vicinity.

She was a very hard working and conscientious official. She had a deep respect and admiration for her Indian friends; her work among these people will never be forgotten. She saw many changes take place during her 26 years of work in Mellette County. As she went about, aiding the sick and injured she also did everything possible to make their lives better in every way. Of her, it can be said, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

This is only a brief report of the many adventures that Ida McDonald and the many other government nurses experienced and similar events in their line of duty. To them, one and all, we pay tribute with words of gratefulness for the many courageous deeds which they did in spite of all kinds of hardships.

# The Post Office at Toledo, S. D.

**By Mrs. Ida Mallett**

In 1908, I traded eighty acres of land near Presho for the Island of timber on the Big White River. Once it had been owned by the John Dillion family. He moved to Presho, S. D., and had a furniture store; he also was our first undertaker here for some years in Presho.

On October 12, 1908, with the help of a crew of men, we loaded the sawmill at the old Blunk crossing south of Presho. Our power was four-horse teams and our other supplies were hauled in a covered wagon. We moved it all to the Island. It took us three days to go the 50 miles. We got to Murdo, S. D., (what there was of it then), and rested our teams. After they had rested we went on to the river, 15 miles southwest of Murdo. When we got to the river bluffs the traveling was too rough for me so I got off and walked. We camped on the north side of the Big White because the river was so high we couldn't cross for a few days. Our camp was at John Williams ranch. I think that their boy, Muggs Williams, still lives at Murdo. They were sure good to me. They moved to Murdo about that time and we rented their ranch house for a while.

Finally we got the saw mill over the river and set up. We started sawing lumber to build a house to live in but it was late in the winter before we got our house built. We endured some very severe cold weather

# SCENES FROM TOLEDO S. D.

Saw Mill at Toledo

Branding at
Toledo, S. D.

Homesteaders who had meals at Toledo.

Frank Brown, teacher, who boarded at Toledo.

THANKSGIVING DINNER
AT

while we were still living in the tent. We would never think of trying to thaw out our meat or any vegetables until we were ready to use them.

This Island had formerly been a big bottom on the river. The river channel went on both sides of it when the river was up, so that is how it got it's name of "The Island." The Big White River was considered the boundary line between Mellette and Jones Counties so we were sometimes claimed by one County and sometimes by the other; however, the old timers said the original river bed was south of us so we were officially considered to be a part of Jones County.

On January 15, 1909, we went to a dance at Giroux's and I saw my first white women since I had moved there. We finally got our new house finished.

In August of 1909 we built a store and had a very good trade. Most of our customers were Indians that lived around there.

I remember that one time for 17 days we were unable to get to Murdo to get supplies because of heavy snow. Finally several men with four-horse teams and bob sleds got through to Murdo for freight, mail and supplies for the store.

We put in a Post Office in 1912 when the homesteaders started coming to Mellette County. It was called the Toledo Post Office. One of the first homesteaders I can remember was Joe Novey. He crossed the river at our crossing on the way to his homestead.

There were times when the river bed surrounding our land was covered with ice and water. I was caught out in the woods one time and all I could do for a while was get behind trees until the big cakes of ice floated by. I wasn't too far from the store and made it home safely.

We had one good saddle horse that would swim the river if we just had to cross. My brother Roy was trying to cross one time and had the saddle cinched so tight the horse couldn't swim. So Roy finally swam to shore and the horse floated down the river to the crossing where he got out.

They built a bowery on our Island and we had many dances and good times there. Our homesteaders were all such nice friends and ate many of their meals at our store. I baked our own bread and sold it to the ones who didn't have a way to do their own baking. We ate many rabbits, grouse and fish. The Indians had lots of sport getting prairie dogs and they were very plentiful.

I remember the first time I served as a mid-wife. Some young folks going through the country were caught on the Island when the river came up and they couldn't go any direction. So it was up to me to do the best I knew how and we all got through in fine shape.

It seemed like I was a jack of all trades. One time I was herding horses for a fellow and I got pretty disgusted with them as they insisted on getting into a corn field. I thought I'd take the shotgun and give them a good scare, but I got a little too close and peppered them in good shape. Instead of them going to the far side of the Island as I had intended them to, they went directly into the corrals. I was pretty uneasy about them for a little while but none of them had any bad effects at all. But I didn't herd horses with a shotgun after that.

Through the years I had many young folks living with us at different times. In 1914 we had a fire which destroyed our store and home. The following is an account of the fire at Toledo in 1914:

"The fire which destroyed the store and home of W. R. Mallett on White River on Wednesday of last week started in the house at about 1:30 p.m. The millers, which have been so bad everywhere this spring, were especially numerous in a bedroom upstairs and the girl who occupied the room determined to rid it of the intruders so put a lighted sulphur candle in the room and closed all the doors and windows. She went down stairs for about five minutes and when she returned to see how it was getting along she found the room enveloped in flames.

"She spread the alarm and Mr. Mallett rushed up with a bucket of water. Throwing this on the flames checked them and he says that if another pail of water had been at hand he is confident he could have put out the blaze without much damage, but by the time he got more water the fumes of the sulphur were so strong that they could save nothing in the room and realizing that the house and store were doomed, they began to save what property they could. However, the sulphur was worse than either the heat or smoke from the fire and they were not able to get much out.

"They saved a dresser, two chairs, an organ, a desk and post office supplies. This was about all they got out as they could not even get to their clothing. The fire consumed the house, store and contents, besides a large bowery which had been built that spring. None of the property was insured so it was a total loss and a heavy one."

Nina Shouldis had been with me for a long time and was to be married that fall. I loved her and she was so good to me. She lost all her savings and clothes in the fire, as we all did.

Frank Brown, another teacher and friend made his home there, also, and was to be married soon. He lost all his belongings as did many others who were friends and had no other place to store or keep things while they were away teaching or working. Soon after the fire the homesteaders began to prove up and people were soon scattered.

I remember while we were living on the river how we used the looking glass to signal for attention, especially across the river when it was high. If the sun was shining we could regulate the reflection and signal to folks quite a distance away. We had no telephones those days. I also remember about how we used to listen to the cowboys who were out riding the ranges. They were often singing and the sound came clear down the valleys. We especially enjoyed one who used to sing, "Will There Be Any Stars in My Crown?" When we heard that we would know it was Hal riding herd.

I went to Rapid City to work later on. And finally moved into a small house near Toledo where an old man who lived there previously, had recently died.

When this old man died (it was after we burned out and most of the people had proven up, so there weren't many around to take care of him), no one had the money to bury him. He had an out door bath-room and the boys tore it down, took it apart and made a box. They put in some hay and I had a sheet I did spare. We wrapped him in the sheet, put him in the box and loaded him in the wagon. They started for White River town and cemetery where he was to be buried.

My brother Roy was driving the wagon and when he got to the Little White River crossing the water was up high in it. In crossing over he nearly lost his wagon box and all, but finally got through. But that was an experience we didn't care to have happen often. It seemed like there were few deaths in those days but so many have passed on since.

My old grey mare that I had driven since 1898 finally got so old and poor that the magpies tortured her to death, much to my sorrow.

My little nephew Clellen lived with me for a while and was my joy and pride. He is grandpa many times over by now.

The Island was a lonely place after the homesteaders left. The post office was closed and my Mellette County friends got their mail at Texsam or other places.

Eventually I came to Presho to work and care for my parents. My parents have since passed on but I am still working and thankful that I am able to. I also remember my days on the Island at Toledo, S. D.

# When Maxwells Lived in Mellette County

**By Arch Maxwell**

During the filing for homesteads in Mellette County, I drove for Mr. Harold Oldham, one of the locators. I sure had lots of fun with the ones who came to choose their homesteads. Some, when they saw their claim, were pleased. Some of them were disgusted and left the country. I drew number 604 and filed on number 411. My homestead was six miles east of White River. I got a fairly good place with lots of good water and they tell me that the well is still as good as ever after all these years of continuous use.

At the time of the filing we were living in Winner. When the filing was all over I got a team and wagon and loaded up enough lumber to build a 12 x 14 shack.

The wife and I went to the homestead and built our shack. Then we went back to Winner, put our furniture on a hayrack and started for the farm. We didn't get there that day as a big rain came up. I tied the tent over the load, turned the team and cow loose, and crawled in under the tent. The wife sat on a tub and I sat on a box all night. If we raised our heads so they touched the tent, the water would run down on Nell. The next morning we had fried potatoes and black coffee made over a camp fire.

We got to the homestead the next day and got unloaded with the help of a neighbor. We sure had a good supper, with lots of prairie chicken, as they were plentiful all the time we lived out there.

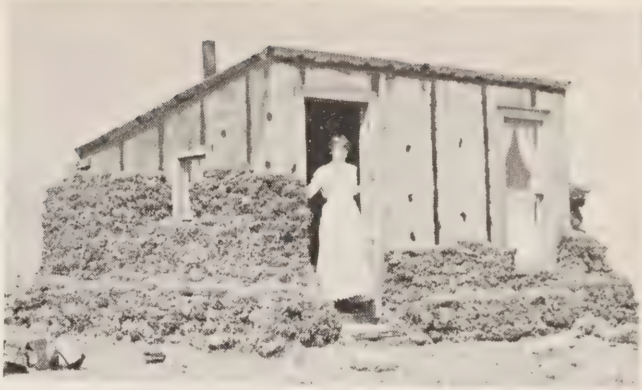
When we first went to the homestead, several families burned red cedar wood, picked up in the Little Bad Lands. We ran out of it in February 1915 and I went to Murdo to get coal. It was a nice day when I left home, but the next morning when I stepped out of the hotel there was a blizzard on. But I started out anyway. The first 16 miles was on a road, but from Westover on south it was just a trail. The snow was so deep I couldn't see the trail. I put the horses at the side of the trail and I walked in it so I could tell by the road ruts where I was going. I walked twelve miles in that blinding blizzard. By then I was all in so I got up on the wagon and just let the team go. They took me home. But after that I managed to get my coal home in September.

I lived on the homestead until 1919, then traded for land in Gregory County.

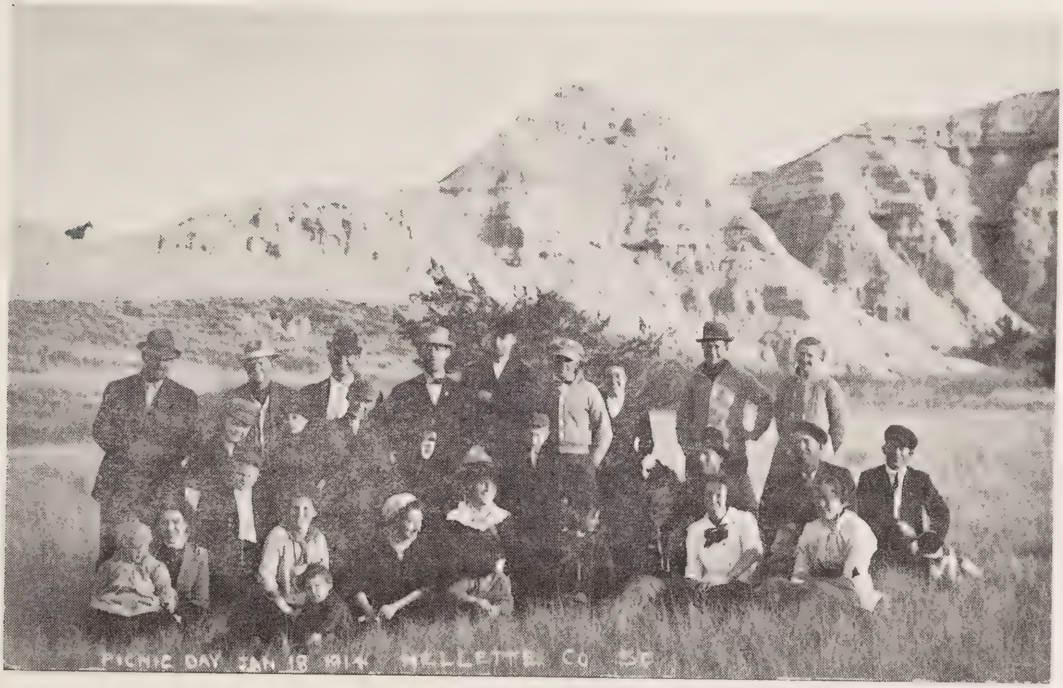
We still have a warm spot in our hearts for Mellette County. It still seems like home to us.

Mellette Co
DRAWING FIRST ENVELOPE, LAND OPENING
OCT 24TH 1911, GREGORY, S.DAK.
PHOTO
COPYRIGHT 1911
BY
HEMPHILL & HULTON

Mr. and Mrs. Jake Scholl



Margaret Bramer (later Mrs. Otto Hanson) and her homestead shack.



PICNIC DAY JAN 18 1914 MELLETTE CO. SD

**Picnic in Badlands, 1914.** Mr. and Mrs. Stromer and family, Mr. and Mrs. Hutchinson and family, Mr. and Mrs. Anderson and family, Mr. Atzer, Mr. and Mrs. Maxwell, Mr. Antone, Mr. and Mrs. Heinbaugh, Mr. and Mrs. Hanson, Mr. Collins, Mr. Bonus, Alice and Anna Lundberg, and Myrtle Mullens.

# Jim Mitchell's Diary

By Gladys Mitchell

I, Gladys Mitchell, am the first white child born to farmers in Mellette County. I was born on June 16, 1911. (Mellette County was created in 1909 but not open to homesteaders until October 1911.) In April 1908, Mitchells had a bad fire at Lynch, Nebr. The water there also disagreed with them, so these two factors helped them decide to go West.

My dad kept a diary in the early years and I have copied some of the information regarding the way things were in the early days in Mellette County.

Quotations from his diary follow and also comments by Gladys.

March 1909: I, Jim Mitchell, came to Mellette County with real estate men and bought the SW 3 40-28. This was deeded land purchased from Sutton. Paid $2,348.64. Everywhere you look it is open prairie, no fences and only winding trails. Very few white people living out here, just at the Trading Posts. Even Indian homes are far apart.

Feb. 2, 1910: We sold our possessions at Lynch, Nebr.

April 1910: We started to move to Mellette County. (Mr. and Mrs. Mitchell and their son, Leroy, who was born near Spencer, Nebr., in 1906.) I hired Ray Sinkey for one month to help move. We shipped to Dallas, S. D. (the end of the railroad) our horses, cattle, machinery and furniture. From Dallas we freighted it all out by team and wagon across country.

April 17, 1910: A big snow today on this Rosebud Reservation.

April 19, 1910: Started to break sod on our place.

Gladys says that by reading this diary it was easy to see what a lot of work her folks did to get their home started. They lived in a tent from April until September. Then they had a three room house built that cost a little over $285.00. Also this first summer they were busy building shelters, mostly hay sheds, for their hogs and milk cows. They purchased lumber from A. K. Woods and Company. They did some fencing and the fence posts were traded for from the Indians. The nearest Trading Posts were Carter and Wood. Some times they'd hitch four head of horses to a wagon and haul hogs to market. Winner, S. D., was one market, also Crookston or Valentine, Nebr. They would bring back big supplies of groceries and material needed for fencing and building. Mother made butter from the cream. She'd mold it into pound prints and hang it in the well until they went to town. They also raised a big garden and had vegetables to trade or sell.

Going to town with a team and buggy took several hours. Lots of times, before they got home, dark would overtake them and chores would have to be done with the aid of a kerosene lantern.

One morning, while they were still living in the tent, my father went to chore after breakfast. It was too warm for his cap so he tossed it back into the tent. It landed on the trunk but rolled off onto the bare ground upside down. He took his hat and went to work. A few hours later one of my parents entered the tent and discovered a big rattlesnake trying to get comfortable in the cap. The snake was soon killed.

Another scare my father had was while working in the field. He became too warm and took his coat off and left it at the end of the field until the noon hour. Then he picked up the coat, tossed it over his arm ready to drive the team home. He felt a movement in the coat and a rattlesnake came crawling out of the sleeve. Such was the beginning of a new life in the West.

Grass was thick and tall that year, there wasn't much livestock to graze it down. It rained often and every crop was good. That first year, 1910, my dad sold and traded $163.65 worth of pumpkins and squashes and $80.81 of melons.

Jim Mitchell's diary continues:

April 11, 1911: Mrs. Mitchell put out 41 little baby chicks with hens today.

May 7, 1911: Terrible prairie fire, south of us, burned three days.

May 1911: Breaking more sod, going to have more crop and a bigger garden for food for the family and to sell.

May 25, 1911: Election day in White River. I was one of the judges. White River got the County Seat.

June 16. 1911: Our little girl was born. The nurse was brought by team and buggy by a neighbor from the Indian Day School on White Thunder Creek. Her name was Mrs. Ross. We named our little girl Gladys Amelia Mitchell. She is the first white child born in Mellette County to farmers.

June 18, 1911: I rounded up my cattle and horses today and counted eleven little colts. I got a letter from my father, and brother, in Nebraska wondering if their brother and son out West was still alive. They have been hearing a lot of rumors about snakes and Indians out here. Neighbors are few and far between but we help each other out whenever help is needed, whether the job is to clean out John Bonser's well or any other work to be done.

July 8, 1911: Finished fence across the quarter. Got two inches of rain.

July 27, 1911: Went for wild plums and chokecherries.

Sept. 1, 1911: Had three inches of rain this week. Relatives came to see the faithful pioneers. Had to meet them in Winner, South Dakota. Came home in the rain with the team and buggy.

Oct. 19, 1911: Froze real hard.

Oct. 21, 1911: To the fair in White River. We got $3.85 in prizes. Raised 155 bushels of potatoes this year.

Oct. 22, 1911: Mrs. Joe Siegmund and Helen came over. They live near Berkley. Weather is cold. We get our wood from the Badlands about four miles away.

Nov. 10, 1911: A big blizzard and getting worse.

Dec. 8, 1911: Mrs. Mitchell's sister came from Spencer, Nebr. (Went back on the fifteenth.) She didn't know whether the West was so good after all.

Dec. 22, 1911: Our big girl has one tooth through. She is doing good regardless of much cold weather and snow this winter.

Dec. 25, 1911: Joe Siegmund spent Chirstmas with us on our first Chirstmas in Mellette County. Joe Siegmunds and Jim Mitchells are the only white people between Butte Creek and Horse Creek. Gladys' first picture was taken today at White Thunder Creek, an Indian Day School where white people are teaching the Indian children. There is also a nurse stationed there. Our baby girl has been quite an attraction out here. (After our Indian neighbors heard that those white people who moved in had a little baby, they would come to see her. They could hardly believe that there was such a thing as a white baby, or little pale-face as they would say. They spent lots of time just watching her, talking between themselves in Indian. Her mother curled Gladys' hair over her fingers the next day after she was born. Later her hair got longer so she made long curls around Gladys' head. These curls were something new to the Indians and seemed to interest them very much. The Indians were friendly and good neighbors. Few spoke English and we used signs to understand each other much of the time when we traded with them.)

Jan. 1, 1912: 22 below zero.

March 11, 1912: Made a trip to Winner, taking hogs to market. Took three days for the trip. Hay is selling for $2.00 per ton.

April 1, 1912: Breaking more sod for crop and fencing.

April 8, 1912: Building a dam, with horses, so stock could have water. Fortunately we are located near good spring water; it comes out of the ground and side hills.

April 25, 1912: Have a big garden in. Set out twenty-eight grape vines. Planted lots of potatoes.

July 3, 1912: My father came out to visit and see his grandchildren.

July 29, 1912: Making hay with horses. Mowing raking then hauling it into the yards for winter. Building a cave.

Sept. 24, 1912: Had four inches of snow and a freeze.

Dec. 6, 1912: A trip to Spencer, Nebr., for furniture and goods stored there.

Jan 17, 1913: My youngest brother, George, filed his claim on 120 acres of land in Section 13.

March 14, 1913: Having the worst blizzard we've had in several years but not very cold here.

March 23, 1913: Easter Sunday. Roy is three foot, eleven and a half inches tall. Gladys is two foot, nine and a half inches tall.

**Mr. and Mrs. Jim Mitchell, Gladys and LeRoy**

April 26, 1913: Charles Wagner is a good neighbor and hired man. He plowed the ground and the women planted the potatoes, melons, squashes and sweet corn by the acres.

July 10, 1913: Two and one-half inch rain. Got the dam finished just in time.

Aug. 26, 1913: Bought a potato digger of Mr. Brown who has a store at Wood. He is one of our potato customers. Sometimes we haul a load to Winner. (This would be a three day trip with one man on a wagon and trailing another. Sometimes we delivered six loads on one trip. We'd haul back supplies for ourselves and our neighbors.) Customers for my potatoes in White River are John Hight, Spears Store, A. C. Howlett and many others. We have set out 400 strawberry plants, 110 raspberries, 300 mulberries, 100 catalpa trees, grapes, rhubarb, 50 little apple trees from Grooms, (another homesteader). (During those early years there were several orchards in this community: Jordans, south of Wood, Capt. Hall, George Schmidts, Gerig and others. Today, a lot of Mitchell's first planted trees are still living and bearing fruit.)

Fall, 1913: Five hundred thirty-five bushels of potatoes dug with my potato digger. I hired men from around the neighborhood for pickers; sometimes four wagons were in the field at one time.

Feb. 16, 1914: A township meeting was held, starting a petition for making a new school district.

Feb. 18, 1914: Presented petition to board at Berkley; have one hundred five signers.

April 11, 1914: Snow. Received one thousand apple grafts, postage 83 cents, and 800 strawberries.

May 2, 1914: One inch rain today.

June 5, 1914: One and one-half inch rain.

June 8, 1914: Rain and hail, spoiled some garden.

June 16, 1914: School meeting. S. L. Funk elected treasurer; Sime Friday, chairman; G. Brood, clerk. Nine months school to begin first Monday in September 1914. I hired Asburys and Rennicks to cultivate corn and hoe weeds out of potatoes and garden.

July 27, 1914: Brother George's baby was born 2:00 A. M.

July 30, 1914: Went for buffalo berries by team to somewhere in the Badlands.

Sept. 3-5, 1914: Went to Wood Fair. Took 25 exhibits, got first prize on watermelons, 50 cents. Total prize money $4.75.

Sept. 26, 1914: Mrs. Mitchell's sister and a friend came to visit. Met them with team and buggy at Carter.

Oct. 2, 1914: Took company sightseeing trip through the Badlands; in evening went to a pie social, they took in $13.35. Also, last week took company to visit the Happy Hollow pastor, Van Valkenburgh.

Oct. 5, 1914: Company returned to Nebraska. Finished digging our potato crop estimated at one thousand bushels. John Atkinson and George Schambacker helped pick.

Nov. 27, 1914: Big prairie fire west of Horse Creek.

Dec. 25, 1914: We had a lot of snow. I hauled lots of wood and some are burning cow chips to heat their shacks.

Jan. 14, 1915: Cold and snowing. More homestead neighbors by now. Bis Nollsch comes over often to visit.

June 21, 1915: The community gathered here at our place for an ice cream social. We had home-made ice cream, everybody took turns cranking the freezer and enjoyed themselves.

Aug. 5, 1915: I went to Valentine for lumber to build the Happy Hollow church.

Sept. 11, 1915: To the Fair at White River. Got first prize on rhubarb. Second on potatoes and millet. Total in prize money $1.25. On the way home the doubletrees broke and I had to repair them before we could go on home. Often it is dark and the kids are asleep before we get home. Sometimes traveling the country trails at night there is the danger of wolves. There are some in the country. We see them occasionally near dusk. If they are real hungry they might attack. If you have fresh meat that they can smell they can be dangerous. Fortunately, they have never attacked us, but we keep on the lookout, especially after dark.

Sept. 28 - Oct. 1, 1915: To Fair at Wood; got fifteen ribbons, eleven first and four seconds, totaling $7.85 in prizes.

Oct. 18, 1915: We raised and dug 1,553 bushels of potatoes from ten acres.

Nov. 16, 1915: I butchered three hogs and we will cure the meat.

March 6, 1916: Things look good. I went to Valentine with a load of potatoes. Sold them for 60¢ per bushel, part trade. Brought lumber for hayrack and roofing for the hog shed.

May 23, 1916: Have in a new patch of potatoes. Primary election held today.

June 3, 1916: We ordered a hay loader. (This machine we hitch to the back of the hayrack and steel finger-like things worked up and down as you drove down the windrow. This picked up the hay, worked it up the slide to where it dropped into the hayrack. This was better than pitching all the hay by hand into the rack.)

July 4, 1916: Celebrated. Bought two dozen lemons for a dollar. Two cases of pop at 85¢ each and eight ice cream cones for 35¢.

July 8, 1916: Mrs. Mitchell's father came up to see us, the grandchildren and the new orchard we have started. Lots of rain here this summer.

July 11, 1916: Special school board meeting.

July 17, 1916: Located new school. Rained all night.

Sept. 28 - 30, 1916: To Fair at Wood. Took six prizes, three firsts and three seconds, $3.25 prize money.

Oct. 29, 1916: Roy broke his right arm. He was over at Sam Funk's place playing on the old hay barn. Sunday evening a big prairie fire nearly burned us out. The whole neighborhood was aroused and fighting fire, hauling water with teams and wagons. (Another time we were awakened at midnight by the reflection on the clouds of a prairie fire, we quickly got ready to fight fire. That time we almost moved things out of the house for fear it would burn. Fortunately, for us, the wind changed into another direction. But the fire burned a lot of the county, clear into Tripp County before it was put out.)

Dec. 8, 1916: George Schambacker had his sale. Awful cold weather for two weeks.

Dec. 25, 1916: To Sam Conways for Christmas dinner (related to Hal and Anna Durrin).

Jan. 23, 1917: To Winner with thirty hogs. Sold for $10.25. Brought back a new Edison phonograph which we all enjoy. (Jim played a mouth harp which the kids sure did think was good. The dogs would howl and there was a big noise and a lot of fun for a while.)

Spring 1917: Bought 25 bushels of oats from Joe Siegmund at 80¢ a bushel.

June 1, 1917: Thirty four rows of beans planted, four rows of pop corn. (This was what my dad liked in the winter time, a big dishpan full of popped corn. He'd pop it himself, set down and devour it all. Another favorite snack was a good raw apple or maybe three apples before he retired. He'd set the apples on the back of the wood burning cook stove to warm them a little, then take out his jack knife, quarter them, and eat them slice by slice.)

About this time, George Bauman was our hired man, he liked to butcher and also feed calves. After leaving this community he had a butcher shop in White River.

June 3, 1917: Put up a big flag.

June 5, 1917: Registration day. At our place, boys aged 21 to 31 registered for World War I.

July 28, 1917: Made a contract with Townsend to build three school houses for two thousand dollars. Had a real bad hail storm yesterday—broke windows and damaged the garden.

Sept. 25, 1917: Capt. Hall proves up.

Feb. 16, 1918: I have been planning a new barn for some time. We bought the lumber today in White River. Also 34,000 shingles, 60 sacks of cement and 28 barn window-sashes for $1,350.00. A well has already been dug and the new barn will be built around the well. Material for the well cost $27.00.

Feb. 20, 1918: Bis Nollsch had his sale. He was a settler and a good help in this community and of the Happy Hollow Church. His wife, formerly Nellie Housman, plays the organ.

May 10, 1918: Had a social and dance in the new barn, cleared $100.00 for the benefit of the Red Cross.

May 20, 1918: Red Cross drive got $150.00 this side of Horse Creek. I bought $150.00 worth of Liberty Bonds.

June 10, 11, 12 and 13, 1918: Painted the new barn by hand . . . John Gretschmann, Capt. Hall and some other men. Also I helped part time.

Sept. 12, 1918: Registration Day for men from 18 to 45 years of age.

Dec. 22, 1918: The flu bug has hit the country. (Mitchells were nearly all confined inside the house, some in bed. Mother was the only one that was able to be up and she had to do all the chores. Sometimes neighbors dropped in and helped her. We had bitter cold nights and lots of snow. My brother took worse and I got the nose bleed so we sent for the doctor in White River. Doctor Schmitters, a lady Doctor, was brought out by one of the Kiser Brothers. They ran a hardware in White River. In the midst of all this sickness my grandfather and his nephew came to visit. They wouldn't run away and leave us without help, so stayed a while. In a few days this nephew came down with the flu. He was in bed for several days but wasn't so sick. As soon as he thought he was well enough to travel they left again for their home in Nebraska.)

Gladys continues the story of the Mitchells as follows:

Jan. 1919: Prospects were good for crops in 1919. We had a lot of horses then. Dad halter broke the colts and got them gentle. I was always interested in the livestock, colts and calves. One day my Dad held a colt and set me on its back. Later he'd lead it around the corral, sometimes holding me on to give me a ride. That was the most fun I ever had. Once in a while one of the mares would get a barbed wire cut or get sick and we'd go for the medicine, or get the old book down that had all the remedies written down in it and told just what to do. People did not call for a veterinary in those days.

June 13, 1919: Dad was re-elected chairman on the school board. This was the year the big new barn was filled with hay and alfalfa, by using slings in a hayrack, the track and carrier up in the top of the barn. We could drop the sling load of hay wherever we wanted it. This was fed in the winter by pushing the hay down through the opening over the horse or cow mangers. This was much handier than feeding out in the open during blizzards and the water was indoors too.

Nov. 11, 1919: Dad had a terrible sick spell and thought he was going to die. Our neighbors, Allison, lived about a quarter mile across the field. Mother sent my thirteen year old brother over there for help. Allison came over, took our saddle horse and started to White River to see the doctor. He rode across country, there was a lot of snow and it was slow traveling. He got to the place where Pete Nohrenberg lives now. At that time there was a tall green house near to the big butte and the road went close by it. The horse was played out, so Mr. Briggs, (he lived there then), let Allison take his horse on over to White River. Later he returned, exchanged horses again, and arrived home about midnight with the medicine. My Dad recovered in a few days. It was a gallstone attack and he never had a spell again.

In 1919 or 1920 Dad purchased our first car. It was one-seated type. The back was enclosed, with screen sides. By making a seat to fit back of the front seat we could all ride and by removing this home-made seat we could haul all sorts of things like they do in pickups of today. Even hogs were hauled to Winner in it. Lumber, nails, groceries, everything was hauled back. Sometimes he hauled coal for the school house near our place. If we (kids) saw him coming and unloading coal, we'd drop everything and run down to meet him just to get a ride back to the house. One time, I remember, my brother and I were choring. We were feeding the cattle at the big feed rack that held one hundred loads of hay. We saw Dad coming to the school house with a load of coal. We put our forks down at the barn in a hurry. We yelled a quick "Good Bye" to Mother and off to the school house we went. In a short time she missed us as she hadn't heard us yell where we were going. Worried and wondering where those kids were she saddled a horse and rode to the neighbor's looking for us. About the time she returned home, here we came riding in the car with my Dad, happy as could be. But she was pretty disgusted. We not only enjoyed our car but it also shortened the time it took going and coming to town. In the wintertime it didn't start very good so a team would be hitched to it to pull it around in the yard until it started.

Hope was high, the corn was tall and green, the cattle were fat, rains fell often so plans were developing for a new house. This house had been a dream for 15 years or more and was going to be a modern home.

Nov. 26, 1922: A new girl arrived. This daughter was named Gertrude Elizabeth Mitchell. Ethel Emerick, Evelyn and Mrs. George Schmidt worked for us at that time.

1926: This was the year that the long-planned-for new house was built. By now there were trucks available to haul the lumber from town. But some of the sand was hauled by team and wagon from the Little White River. John Gretschmann was the main carpenter and Bill Valburg helped. Fred Schwartz was the electrician who put in the wiring for the lights. By midsummer the house was completed enough to move into. Mother had said so many times that she was so tired of living with things behind the doors and under the beds so she wanted a house with plenty of room. During this same summer we bought a new car and also another quarter of land.

Our new car was a Dodge sedan. In 1927 or 1928 we made our first trip to the Black Hills. In 1927 we bought our first Farmall tractor. This was the beginning of farming on a larger scale, buying more machinery to get more done. We hardly had time to eat or sleep. In 1929 we made a six weeks trip to the West coast. We had planned this trip for a long time so decided this was the time to let go and enjoy ourselves from our past years of labor. Visiting relatives and special sights made the trip worth while. We were glad to get home and were tired but it was a long remembered trip.

My brother married the next year, 1930. Times began to change.

Jan. 24, 1931: My mother passed away. Most of the things she had planned and worked for were accomplished. We made adjustments and kept on ranching and farming.

March 4, 1934: My father, Jim Mitchell, was accidently killed. This was a shock for the whole family as he was always the main spoke of the family in every way. Now was the time for the younger generation to take over.

This, also, was the year of drouth, wind and dirt blowing. Sometimes you couldn't see our barn from the house and we had very little rain for several years. Crops were planted but didn't do much good because it was so dry and windy. Some of the crops blew out. Some people replanted but didn't raise much. Sometimes the stunted grain was cut for hay so at least we could get a little feed for our milk cows. Cattle got thin, the Government bought some and killed some. The conditions lasted several years and people sold most of their cattle. Thistles were cut and stacked for feed. They made pretty fair feed if put up while green. The plague of the grasshoppers was upon us then and next were beetles. These conditions caused a lot of people to move to other states or to towns where they could make a living. The Government started projects such as W. P. A. and others, to give the people a source of income. Also had workers building dams in various locations. Food and clothing were issued to the needy. This was the black thirties.

1940: We had some moisture and things were a little better; then in December 1941 World War II started with the bombing of Pearl Harbor. This again brought conditions that nobody liked. It wasn't long until gas was rationed, also kerosene and sugar. Different kinds of repairs and parts were hard to get. Then tires were hard to buy; but finally they discovered a way to recap old tires so you could get along a while. Many kinds of material were scarce for common use because of the demand in war production factories. Many homes were broken because of war casualties.

1945: A lot of boys came home and had to start in all over again and many never came back.

1949: We had a big snow storm, the worst we'd had for several years in Mellette County. But the winters of the past that were open without much snow also did not leave enough moisture to help the crops the following year. The melting snow drifts from the 1949 storm soaked up the pastures and the grass started to grow again.

1951-52: Another bad winter. Storms, snow and ice, very difficult to travel, people were stranded on highways and in homes. They were short of hay for their livestock by spring. Crews worked almost day and night to open roads to haystacks after the long January blizzard. Others had to buy hay and have it trucked in and even poor hay was high priced.

In the fifties we had better years. We had some moisture for pretty good crops. The people still living here put their shoulders to the wheel and took an interest in their farms again. Prices are better and people are prospering again and now we feel that, all in all, the West has been good to us.

My home has never been anywhere else but in Dakota, I still live on my home place where I was born. I am a born Dakotan.

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Taken from the Supplement to The Mellette County Pioneer.
Vol. 6 - No. 39, Wood, S. D., Friday, Nov. 2, 1917, F. C. Kirch, Editor:

Just five years ago this week, the present Editor took charge of the Pioneer and we have not been the least bit sorry that we cast our lot in Wood. But doesn't time fly? We are still looking for that railroad and we yet live in hopes of seeing the steam cars come puffing into Wood from the east some day.

# Four Seasons on the Prairie

By Doris Susan (Kerlin) Moniz

## Part One: "Christmas on the Prairie"

My childhood recollections of the Dakota prairies are some of the happiest memories that I have. Take Christmas, for instance, and the entire winter season. Where else can one find such serenity of quiet nights, where one can look out of a farm house window, seeing nothing but miles and miles of snow-covered prairies, and the moonlight creates a sparkling beauty. Only an occasional coyote howling in the distance breaks the deep silence.

There was no fear in hearing the coyotes howling on the Charlie Kerlin homestead in Mellette County, because my brother, sister and I were safely sheltered in a warm, loving home where we received the spiritual guidance of a devoted Mother and Father. Our needs were few, we dressed simply, had nourishing, common food and knew nothing of a stream of noisy city traffic, loudly tooting their horns, continuing noisily night and day. We were spared the constant jangling of the telephone and the continued blare of radios and television in those days.

If one could peek into our farm house window on a winter evening, the sight they would see would touch their heart. A single kerosene light shone on the round dining room table. The mother of the little group was sitting in a rocking chair near the light where she could see to do the family mending. In the other rocking chair, was my father holding a little blond girl on his lap, and reading to all of us, stories from the Bible. I was the little girl, my brother Dick and sister Mary were sitting close listening to the wonderful Bible story. Contentment reigned over this little family group.

Sometimes in the evening my mother made fudge or popped corn, then we sat around our big, wood-burning stove and enjoyed our little treats. Sometimes my brother and sister sat at the dining room table, doing their school home-work by the light of the kerosene lamp.

We had a piano, which was played by Dick and Mary, and an old Edison phonograph (which I still have) and later on a radio which we took turns listening to, through ear phones.

We always went to Sunday School and Church at the Congregational Church. It was such a joy to take part in the annual Sunday School Christmas program. The entire congregation started the program by singing, "Joy to the World." Then, one by one, the little tots went up front and spoke their Chirstmas pieces. Most of them were about the birth of Baby Jesus, and his parents, Mary and Joseph, along with the Angels, Shepherds and Wise Men. A few selections were about snow-men and winter time. After the childrens' program was finished, other Christmas hymns were sung and then there was a silence. Suddenly, away off in the distance, you could hear sleigh bells coming closer and closer. The back door of the church would open and jolly old Santa Claus himself, came bounding through the door, carrying a bag full of goodies for the kiddies. Each child received a big red apple, a juicy orange and a sack of Christmas candy. After it was all over we drove home in wagons drawn by horses. We were bundled up snugly in blankets and robes made from animal skins.

You didn't see a Santa Claus on every street corner like they have nowdays in the cities. You didn't fight a jostling crowd in department stores buying, buying and buying, going more and more into debt. Christmas shopping was usually for necessary items like new clothes and was mostly done by way of Montgomery Ward and the Sears, Roebuck catalogues.

My Mother spent weeks preparing for Christmas. In November, she made the fruit cake and put it away to age until Christmas. She spent hours in the kitchen, making different kinds of candies, cookies and rolls. The folks killed a turkey or goose, whichever they chose, as we raised our own. It took time to pick the fowl, clean it, stuff it with giblet dressing and roast it for our Christmas meal. Mom boiled her own pumpkins which we had raised, and made home-made pumpkin pies, also mince and apple pies. We had our own whipped cream and even when it wasn't whipped, the cream was so thick you had to spoon it out of the jars. It was even too thick to pour sometimes. Now in the cities, you buy cartons of whipping cream at expensive prices and you wonder if it is skim milk, it is so thin and watery.

We had home-made pickles and relish. We cooked our own home-grown potatoes and had home-canned peas or corn, or some other vegetable from the cellar. We always had a huge Christmas dinner with all the trimmings and most of it was raised and prepared on our own farm.

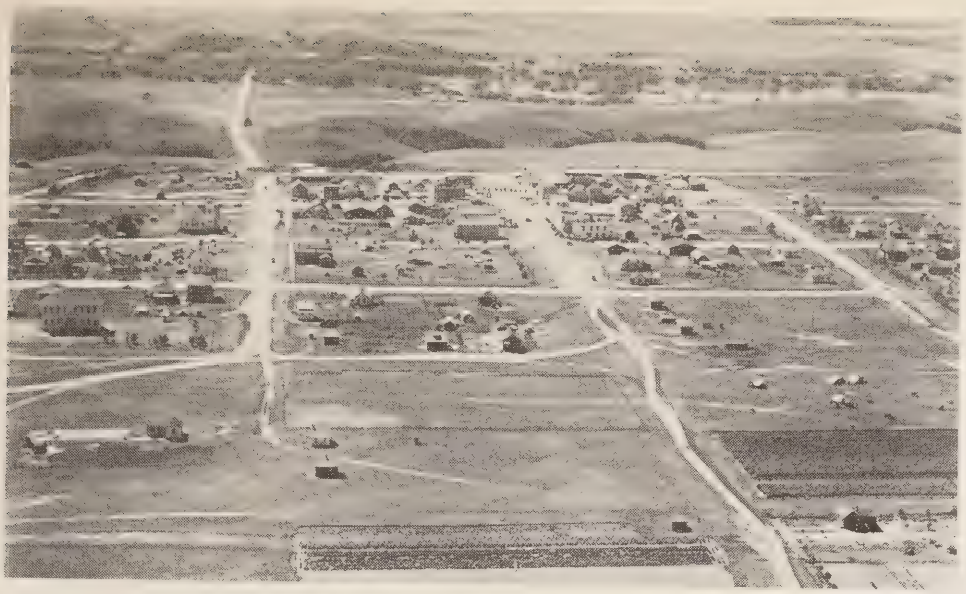
Gifts were simple, usually needed clothing like sweaters, socks or warm mittens. Sometimes we got a sled, wagon or a dolly. Sometimes toys were ordered from the catalogue or games like checkers and dominoes.

Our Christmas tree was usually simple and small—trimmed with strings of cranberries and popcorn, then decorated with home-made ornaments. No glittering lights in rainbow colors as we didn't have electricity.

Of course, we three wrote traditional letters to Santa and for days and days before Christmas we would look out of our frosted windows, gazing skyward to the North. We were visualizing Santa arriving on Christmas Eve after riding through the starlit sky with his eight famous reindeer.

Christmas was the one special day of the winter that will always live in our hearts. Even now, in sunny California, I miss the snowy Christmases I had during childhood.

There were other happy days in winter also. I used to tag along after my brother Dick in the snow when he went to check his rabbit traps. Sometimes the traps would catch a skunk instead of a rabbit. At times the snow had such a hard frozen crust on it that you could walk right on top of deep drifts without breaking through. After our exercise in the cold fresh air we would return to the farm house ready for a good hot dinner. The kitchen would smell "cinnamony" because my mother and Mary had baked an "Apple Betty." Perhaps they had made home-made noodles to add to the chicken soup they were cooking—or sometimes it was chicken and dumplings. Always there was home-made white and rye bread, home-made butter and jellies and jams. Our troubles were few as a child and I would give anything to return to the prairie I loved so well and to have my nine children enjoy at least one winter there, as I did in my childhood.



Early view of White River, from the east.

Mrs. Kerlin, front, right

Happy Hollow Picnic

### Part Two: "Spring on the Prairie"

The winter snows cannot last forever. Finally Mother Nature decides the snow has been around long enough so she sends a little warm sunshine and the days grow longer as the nights grow shorter.

The creek behind our farm house has been frozen over all winter. Now it is beginning to melt. We three children bundle up and head for the creek to play with the ice that has broken into various shapes. Our childish minds see make-believe articles in these pieces of ice, such as a chair, a bed, or stove or whatever we fancy. Through the bare branches of the trees the sun shines down and it gives glorious colors to these pieces of ice. They twinkle like millions of miniature rainbows or diamonds scattered here to beautify the old creek bed.

We spend several days playing with these tiny ice particles. Day by day they change shape, becoming smaller and smaller until they entirely melt away. And now our creek has a flowing stream in it. The grassy creek banks are starting to turn green after being buried under the snow all winter. Overhead, tiny leaves emerge on the trees and white blossoms come forth on the wild plum trees. The plum tree blossoms smell like perfume on the prairie. Meadow larks and other birds burst into song and the prairie is once again alive with God's little creatures. Overhead, V shaped formations of wild geese, ducks and cranes are once again heading north for the summer, with their plaintive calls. They are broadcasting to everyone that spring is arriving with her full array of beauty.

An old tree fell across the creek at one place and we children used this old tree trunk as a bridge so we could cross over to the other side to pick wild violets and other flowers for our May baskets.

We think spring is here at last but somethimes we are fooled. Without warning, a late spring blizzard comes unexpectedly. But these snows, too, soon melt and spring is really here. The planting of vegetables begins, also the early farm crops are planted. Homesteaders also did their own butchering and cured their summer's meat.

One incident I remember very clearly was when I was riding to Wood with Daddy to pick up Richard and Mary at school. It was a five mile ride. On the way home we had to go through a gate at the top of a hill. Dick got out of the Model T Ford to close the gate after we had gone through. This particular day, he couldn't get the gate closed so Daddy got out to help him. Just then the brakes gave way and down the hill we went, Mary and I in the old Model T. We ended up right in a dry creek bed, a little bruised but lucky to be alive.

Late in the spring the school children have a big picnic on the last day of school. All the parents and families in the neighborhood attend. There was always lots of food. The children had relay races and all sorts of games, then vacation for the summer began.

* * *

### Part Three: "Summer on the Prairie"

For the farmer, summer is a very busy time. Thirty years ago when I was a little girl on the prairie the work on the farm was much different than it is nowdays. Now the farmers can combine their wheat with one machine, getting many acres harvested in one day. In the olden days, farmers helped each other out and spent several days threshing at each farm.

First, the farmer cut the grain with the binder and shocked it in the field. Threshing time in the late summer was not only a busy time for the men but also a very busy time for the women. They had to cook huge meals to feed the hungry threshers. There was plenty of fried chicken, potatoes and gravy, sliced tomatoes, radishes and onions, roasting ears, fresh peas and carrots, home-made rolls and butter with many kinds of pies and cakes. There would be plenty of coffee and cold lemonade to drink. Between meals the children took pitchers of lemonade or jars of coffee, and cookies out to the fields for the men. Even now, when I cook a big meal for company I use the expression, "It looks like I'm cooking enough for threshers!"

We children always enjoyed the times when it was our turn to have the threshers at our house because it meant we would have lots of food and excitement.

Some summers, hail came and ruined the crops. The farmers always hoped to have everything harvested before the late summer storms.

Mom did a lot of canning in the summer, all kinds of garden vegetables and pickles. We went down to the creek with our buckets to pick wild plums so Mom could make plum jelly. One summer a preacher was with us and he got lost in the winding creek. I remember how we were yelling; Haloo-o-o! Haloo-o-o! Finally we found him in the plum thickets.

Quite often on a Sunday afternoon, after we had been to church and Sunday School at the Happy Hollow Church, we went for a picnic in the Badlands to a place we called the Butte. I remember one of these occasions, when we returned to the car we found a rattlesnake on the running board. We had to stand real quiet while Daddy shot it. I hated the rattlesnakes, even though a bite from one on my Dad's ankle, was the cause of his meeting and marrying my mother who was his nurse.

Sometimes before the grain was harvested, we kids would run through the wheat and oats to hide. Often we would lie down and look up at the bright blue summer sky and fleecy white clouds. How peaceful it was. It seems that now we don't take time to enjoy the wonders of nature like we used to. People are continually hustling and bustling.

Those who have never experienced a sudden cloud burst or an electrical summer storm in the Dakotas have missed a lot. The brilliant jagged streaks and flashes of lightning, that light up the entire sky are really something, followed by the deafening roar of thunder. And then comes the sudden, cool downpour of rain and the damp air smells fresh and clean and a beautiful rainbow spans the sky. Sometimes hailstones turn the hot dusty day into a cool wet one.

I wonder if they still have Chautauquas in White River. Everyone for miles around came to attend these tent shows. They had vaudeville acts, singing and dancing. And there was always the candy man, walking up and down the aisles, selling little boxes of candy for a dime to the youngsters.

I remember once, right in the middle of a performance, a summer storm came up without warning. There were flashes of lightning, claps of thunder and a heavy rain. Then everyone started hurrying for their homes. The men took down part of the big tent and some of it was already blown down by the wind.

We all climbed into our Model T Ford and headed for the homestead. Sometimes, sheets of rain fell down. The windows on the Model T flapped around if they became unhooked. The road, especially the hills, were like wet bars of soap—very slippery. But somehow Daddy always got us safely home.

I vaguely remember seeing the Indian dances, with the Indian men and women all dressed up in beaded costumes and feathered headdresses. The women danced slowly around the circle. The men did more jumping and yelling as they danced in the center of the circle. They had ceremonial dances for rain, good health, food and good crops.

Sometimes neighbors came to our homestead for picnics. We always had lots to eat and lots of fun. The women would be preparing the food, the men outside visiting, some turning the crank on the ice cream freezer and the children playing in and out. Sometimes after eating, we all gathered around the piano and sang songs together.

During our carefree summers we went to bed early because there were no electric lights. I can remember hearing the frogs croaking in the creek and the crickets chirping in the evenings before I went to sleep. But all things come to an end. The canning was done except for a little late cucumber and watermelon pickles. Summer was about gone and it was now time to prepare for school and the coming autumn and winter.

* * *

### Part Four: "Autumn on the Prairie"

Mother was busy at the treadle sewing machine getting our school clothes ready. In October the plentiful squash and pumpkin are gathered. We attend the County Fair. We have more than enough pumpkins for Hallowe'en Jack O'Lanterns and many pumpkin pies. Hallowe'en on the prairie is prettier than in the cities. Some of the corn has been cut and the shocks are standing in the fields so when the full harvest moon shines down on these corn fields it gives the environment an eerie look.

Then we were once again getting ready for the feast of Thanksgiving. We raised our own turkeys and Dad had won some more at blue rock shoots. We had much to be Thankful for out there on the prairie.

In the fall you could smell bonfires and see the long spirals of smoke on the horizon. Daddy used to let us roast potatoes in the coals of the bonfire and they tasted so good. Sometimes we went for rides near the creek. We saw the colorful red sumacs and the yellow golden rods. After frost the tree leaves changed into gorgeous autumn colors and the creek became a beautiful scene.

Sometimes, around Thanksgiving, the first snow of the season fell, covering the prairie in a blanket of white.

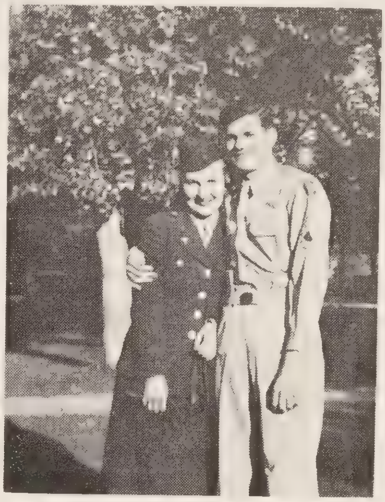
I'll bring my story to a close, covering these four seasons on the prairie, as once again we approach the winter season and begin preparation for celebrating the birthday of a little Baby who came into the world so long ago and whose Heavenly Father made all the wonderful things possible on the prairie and everywhere.

* * *

I left the prairie 30 years ago, when I was eight years old but I will never forget the quiet beauty I knew there.

I was born, Doris Susan Kerlin, in White River and we later moved back to Dad's homestead, the 909 ranch located between White River and Wood. Often we visited friends in White River and drove back to the farm late at night. I can remember looking back at the little twinkling lights of White River from a distance—so alone out there on the prairie. Since then, I have seen the lights of San Francisco and the Golden Bridge, the many beautiful lights of Christmas decorations in the big cities and also their spectacular display of Fourth of July fireworks, and yet to me, the most beautiful lights were the ones of a little prairie town shining in the vast darkness.

Some of my playmates in White River were Hope Hodges, Nella Holland, Lorene Burkinshaw, Dorothy Sherlock, Francis Tisdell and Esther Eaton. (Esther and I used to eat wild onions at school and had to stay during recess once because of it.)



**Al and Doris Moniz**

We left South Dakota to live in Nebraska and I graduated from high school in Linwood, and took nurses training in Scotts Bluff, Nebr. I affiliated in Denver General hospital in Colorado where I met and married my husband, Alfred Moniz. For a short time I was an army nurse. Then later I settled down to raising children. We now have nine children, ranging in ages from fourteen years to five months. I have continued nursing all this time, only taking time out to have my babies. I have also completed two years of college.

**The 9 Moniz Children, 1960**

My husband was born and raised in Hawaii. He is an elementary school teacher. I belong to the Dakota Club here in California, all the members are so friendly. We belong to the Church of the Valley (Congregational). I am a member of the California and Nebraska State Nurses Associations. Our children's names are Elaine, Barbara, Dee, Tommy, Alfred, Nancy, Jimmy, Peggy and Johnnie.

My folks had three children, Richard, Mary and me, and sixteen grandchildren. My parents had an unusual courtship and I am copying a clipping from a newspapers that tells about it. They have both passed on to their Heavenly Home.

I will never forget my childhood in Mellette County. South Dakota, I salute you!

* * *

### "Bitten by a Rattlesnake"

(Copied from a Mellette County paper, White River, S. D., August 31, 1916.)

County Auditor Charles W. Kerlin rode out from White River to the Happy Hollow Sunday School on Sunday afternoon, July 30th, 1916, with George Schambacher. In the evening, he and his deputy, Homer Gillespie started to walk back to White River, following the trail to where it crossed the dam and made a circle to the South. There they left the trail and crossed through a ravine below the dam, following an old cowpath that had grown up to weeds. Mr. Gillespie was in the lead a few paces and he evidently aroused the snake, which coiled and struck Mr. Kerlin on the left ankle just above the shoe top. Mr. Kerlin had stepped on the snake and he said it rattled and struck at the same moment.

Mr. Kerlin lost no time in rolling up his pants leg and, pulling down his sock, took his pen knife and cut in and around the wound causing it to bleed freely. Mr. Gillespie took off one of his shoe strings and tied it tightly about the ankle several inches above the bite. Mr. Gillespie then killed the snake with one of his shoes. Leaving his plug of tobacco with Mr. Kerlin, he started on the run for White River in search of help. This all happened about 8:45 P. M.

After going a little over a mile, Mr. Gillespie met Ernest McLean and wife in an auto, they drove to where Mr. Kerlin was and he was loaded into the auto. Then he was taken to White River where he was under the care of a Doctor by 9:15. Mr. Kerlin was laid up in bed with a badly blistered leg for about three weeks and said the remedy was more severe than the bite.

The wound did not seem to grow better, so an experienced nurse, Miss Ottillie C. Vavra of Omaha, arrived and took charge of the patient. From the moment the nurse arrived, Mr. Kerlin began to improve.

When the snake fastened his fangs into Mr. Kerlin, no one suspected for a moment that a dart from the bow of a most fatal archer was shot at the same instant. It was a great surprise, when Eric A. Brodball and wife, and the Editor of the News, were hurriedly summoned to appear in Mr. Kerlin's apartment over the Mellette County State Bank, Monday evening after supper.

When they arrived, the deadly effect of the dart from the blow of that fatal archer, Dan Cupid, was plainly visible. The room was decorated nicely, with beautiful bouquets upon the center table. Charles was dressed in his best. The nurse was sitting nearby, dressed in white, with white cap, emblematic of the order to which she belonged, and both were wearing their happiest smiles.

Rev. H. C. Van Valkenburgh and wife, of the Congregational Faith had been notified earlier and they were waiting. Everything being in readiness and the hour having arrived, the happy couple took their places in front of the Minister and the wedding ceremony was performed, Eric Brodball giving the bride away.

Mr. Kerlin is well and favorably known over the entire county. He is now serving his first term as county auditor and has a multitude of friends who are his well wishers. Mrs. Kerlin has only been in Mellette County three weeks but during that time has gained the respect of all who have met her and Mr. Kerlin's friends will be her friends.

Shortly after the ceremony, the guests departed, wishing Mr. and Mrs. Kerlin a happy and prosperous journey through life.

No sooner had the guests departed, when the young folks of the town, assisted by many older ones, joined in a tremendous "Charivari," to which Mr. Kerlin generously responded.

Mr. and Mrs. Kerlin are at home to their many friends in their apartment over the Mellette County State Bank in White River.

Mom and Dad Kerlin

### A WINTER TREASURE

Frost formed in the wee small hours
  Woven of the cold, grey atmosphere;
Trees and fences outlined in white
  Made a Christmas-card world here.
Later a winter sun shone through
  Fogbound clouds—receding—
Icicles melting, started to sparkle,
  Bejeweled forms were weeds out masquerading!
Bits of black showed through the white
  As sun chased cold snow away—
I am content, for I have briefly owned
  An original "Currier and Ives" print today!

—Winifred Reutter, White River

# Al Moorhouse Story

By Al Moorhouse

I was living in Kansas when I heard about the opening of land in Mellette County for homesteading. Another man and I went down to Gregory and registered. I drew a number in the five thousands. So in the fall of 1912 I went out to White River and got located by a Mr. Wilson who lived at Murdo. I got a very rough quarter of land between White River and Wood, about a mile off of the highway going east and west.

I bought lumber in White River and got a Mr. Gilliland who lived near Wood, with his team and wagon, to haul my lumber for me. He also helped me build my shack, a 12 x 14. On the way home we got stuck and couldn't make the hill. Somehow we got off the road and ended up near Pearsall's place. He had some mules and he helped us on our way. At that time Mr. and Mrs. Art Turner were building a house on the quarter north of me. They were still living in their barn with their two children, Winifred and Garnet. They had a few head of stock and a fine team of bay horses.

Al Moorhouse

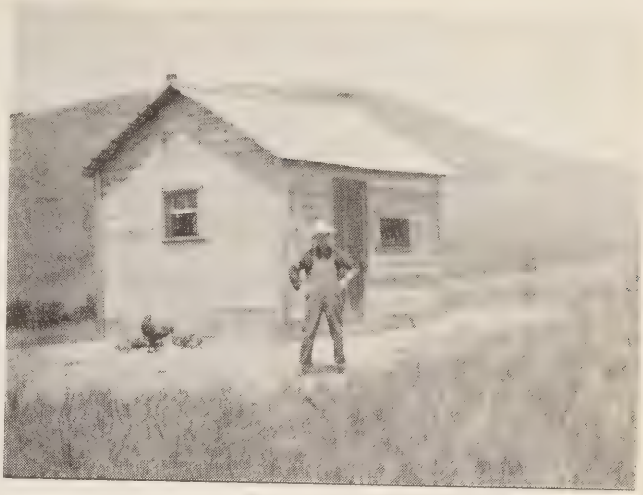
I remember there was lots of wild fruit that year and the grass was waist high, which helped me decide to stay.

I left that fall and went back to Kansas as I had a job with the Santa Fe Railroad in the Harvey Eating House System.

Next spring I started back for White River and got there, I think, in March just shortly before the great blizzard struck. I had gotten a small stove and some groceries. Also I had gathered some wood from the creek by hand when it started in. I remember it was quite foggy that day. I had met some other neighbors by then. John Glatfelter, Homer Wilson, and Gus Kylen. (By the way, Homer and Gus both died this past year.) The blizzard lasted quite a while. I was lucky that I lived through it as I wasn't used to the country, but I stayed in bed most of the time.

There were long horned cattle around there belonging to Red Shirt and lots of them froze to death, standing up in the drifts.

One of my nearest neighbors were the Carl Sorensens. They had two girls and a boy at that time. Their boy, Andy, is still on the place. Albert Wolford was another neighbor. Jim Hardy was another. Then there were the Lige Grahams, the Housmans, Pete Petersens, the Palmers, Frank Tisdells, the Lundberg girls; Alice and Anna, Fritz Lyons, Gallaghers, John Endes, Art and Tom Proctor, Frank Jarboe, T. B. Holland and numerous others.



Al Moorhouse Homestead Shack, 1913

We built a church close to the Wood and White River road. All the neighbors helped with it and we called it the Happy Hollow Church. It was moved to Wood later and is still there at the present time. Close to the church lived Mr. and Mrs. Welton, their son George and his family, and Mr. and Mrs. N. A. Gerig. Also nearby were Ed Korb and wife, John Gretschmann and the Emerick family. Opal Emerick is the wife of George Bauman of White River.

For six years we were all one happy family around there. Then the war came along. I never made any money but when one got hungry all he had to do was drop in at the nearest neighbor and you were always welcome. Another good friend was Charles Kerlin who worked in the courthouse in White River for a number of years. He homesteaded in Happy Hollow where he was bitten by a rattlesnake and later married the nurse who looked after him. They raised their family in Happy Hollow but both have passed away now.

Another family around there was the Jim Mitchell family. Gladys is still on the place raising cattle; she was the oldest girl. Her father was killed while saw-

Al Moorhouse with team and wagon, 1916.

**Nels Nelson, near Homer Wilson's Straw Barn**

ing wood, part of the circular saw broke and hit him in the head. Very tragic and sad.

Then there were the two Staat brothers who lived on the side of a hill, by the trail to White River. They milked cows. Neal, I think was the younger one and John the older one. They lived close to the Red Shirt Dam. Turners used to sell hay to John Hight in town. He got twelve dollars a load for it, then he would buy groceries from John's store which of course were lots more reasonable in price than they are now.

I did not prove up on my homestead. After I had fenced and improved the place I sold the relinquishment to Art Turner for a thousand dollars.

* * *

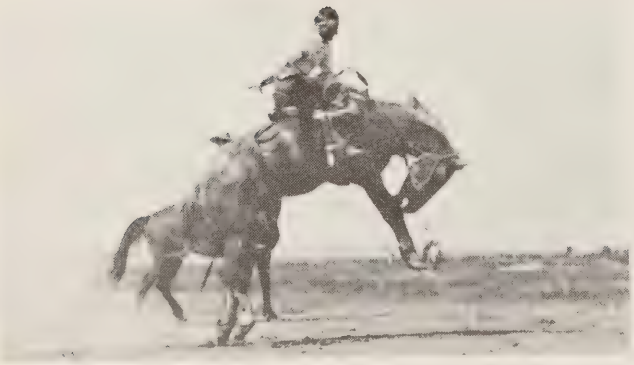
Mrs. Moorhouse adds to Al's story:

His homesteading ended when he was inducted into the service during World War I.

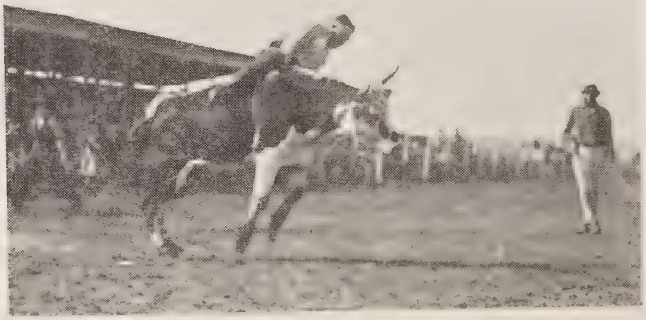
Al left May 24, 1918, from White River with Walt Hagman, Chester Lindquist, Charles Hughes and several Indians. He, with some of the Indians, left the U. S. A. July 16, 1918, for France where he served in the A. E. F. there. He returned to the U. S. A. April 20, 1919, and was discharged May 2, 1919.

When he went into the war he sold his cattle that he had on the homestead. Some of the Indians who went to war at the same time didn't return. But he recently talked to one who had gone overseas with him. Al farmed for a while after he got back and now lives in Martin, South Dakota.

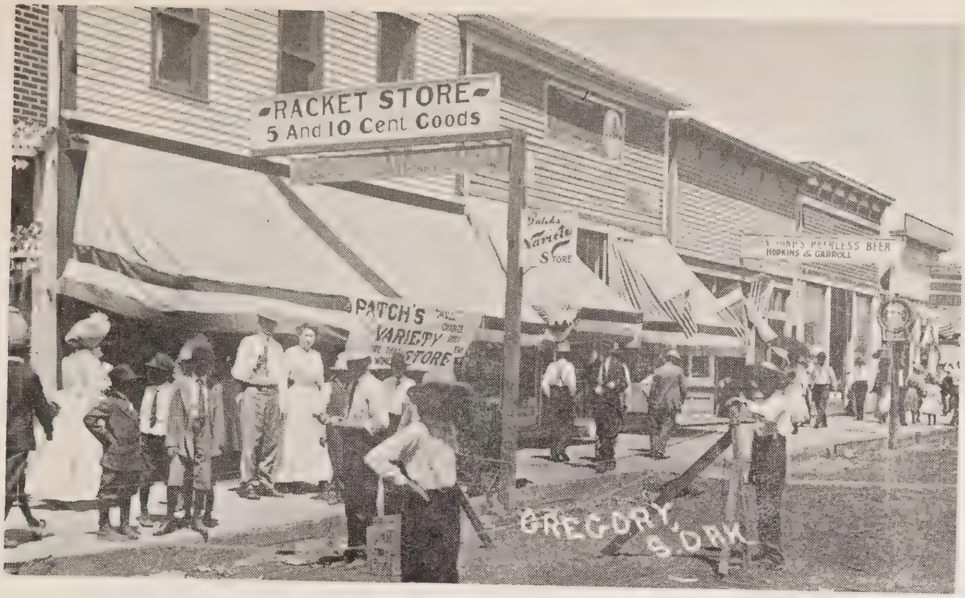
**Ed Arcoren on Redline.**
**Rosebud Indian Fair, 1928.**

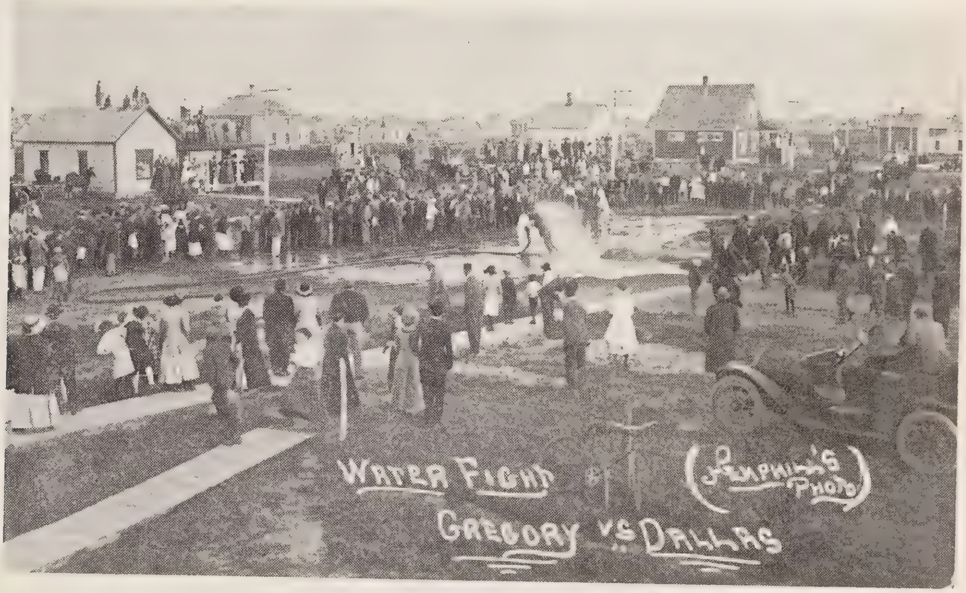


**Scotty Crowley. Not so easy to ride.**
**White River Frontier Days.**



**Eddie Seidler on Yellow Fever.**
**White River Frontier Days.**


RACKET STORE
5 And 10 Cent Goods
PATCH'S VARIETY STORE
Variety Store
PEERLESS BEER
HOPKINS & CARROLL
GREGORY, S.DAK


WATER FIGHT
GREGORY VS DALLAS
Hemphill's Photo

The Claimholder's Burden

MacDonalds, Beilkes, and other neighbors on Swartz Creek.

Cowboy fun around the mess wagon, at White River.

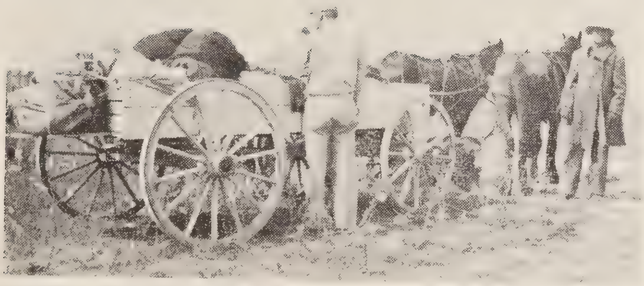
All O'Neill Photo pictures are used in this book by the courtesy of The O'Neill Photo Co. of O'Neill, Nebr.

Art Proctor, Fritz Lyons, H. P. Wilson, with Indian dancers.

Five-year-old Indian girl learning to dance.

Al Moorhouse in studio pose!

# William Morganfield Pictures



Indians near White River. They all but one turned their backs to the camera! Les Morganfield at wheel talking to them.

Left to right: Chas. Conouyer, Jay Seth and John Conouyer.

Rosebud Indians. Outlaw Trading Post, Winner, S. D.

A little fresh meat for the Redman.

## Hidden Gold Near the Old Military Trail

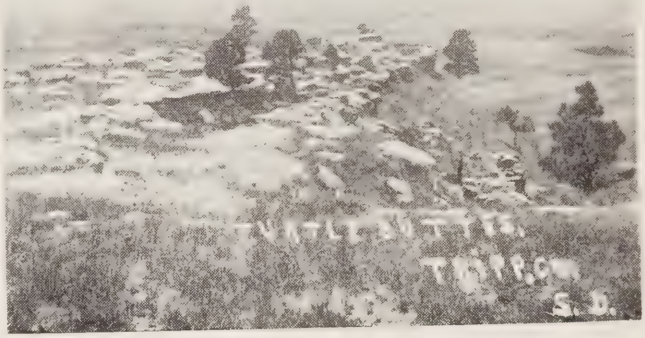
By Wm. S. Morganfield

Many years ago, there was a well-traveled trail between Fort Randall, S. D., and Fort Robinson, Nebr. Freighters and travelers used it enroute to the Black Hills, but mainly it was a military road. It went along the south-central edge of South Dakota. A map clearly showing this old military trail may be seen in the book, "Mellette County Memories." The road was in use from the early 1870's until the Rosebud Reservation was opened for settlement. It was also used by the homesteaders in 1909 to a certain extent.

I can remember that the wagons of the U-Cross cattle outfit traveled this road when they broke camp at the mouth of Sand Creek, as they moved up the Keyapaha River to their new campsite.

In the early 1800's, a shipment of $50,000.00 worth of gold bricks or bars was being hauled east down this road and near the Turtle Buttes (or Turtle Hills as they are called on the map) when three outlaws robbed them and then hid the gold in the hills there. After burying it some place between the three peaks, they took off.

Years afterwards, in the 1920's, I was hauling bridge material on the Keyapaha River and a nice, little old man by the name of Mr. Younger would ride down with me on my first load. Then he'd get off and disappear in the area of the buttes, with his shovel and lunch box and be there all day until I went back from my last load. He did this for about two weeks, but to my knowledge he never found the gold. He was a friendly little old man about 80 years old. I called him "Grandpappy." Later, he returned to Missouri and I never saw him any more. No doubt the gold is still buried there and sodded over forever. I always wondered if "Grandpappy" was one of the bandits.



**View of Turtle Buttes in 1909.** Keyapaha River in background. Old Military Trail about one-half mile to right and that is about where the gold robbery took place.

Last fall, I located the old road, winding across the pastures, turning a little here and there to miss gullies. Some places there were four deep ruts and other places it would widen out to eight or more. This old military trail is located along south-central South Dakota, not too far north of the Nebraska line, keeping on the north side of the Sand Hills.

If that road could talk, it could tell of a lot of sorrow and suffering, and no doubt, a lot of joy. It could tell tales of the travels of the U. S. Cavalry, Indians, covered wagons pulled by oxen, and many adventures at the campsites and water holes along this old historic trail.

## EARLY ROSEBUD POST OFFICE HISTORY

Compiled by Winifred Reutter from records, courtesy of the National Archives, Washington, D. C.

Dakota Territory.
Fort Randall: Daniel L. Pratt, appointed postmaster, March 20, 1874.

Ponca Agency: Discontinued March 15, 1878.
Spotted Tail Agency: Henry C. Dear, appointed Jan. 29, 1878. (Name changed to Rosebud, Dec. 6, 1878.)

Ponca Creek: Daniel L. Baker, Oct., 1878. Discontinued Dec. 13, 1878.

Rosebud: Henry C. Dear, Dec. 6, 1878 (Meyer County); William C. Courtis, Dec. 23, 1878; Egbert DeBell, June 17, 1908; Helen E. Weeks, Sept. 25, 1908; Nelle R. Miller, March 30, 1914 (Todd County).

# The Mountains of Pine Creek

**By Paul L. Mountain**

This story will not be different in general vein from others of the early days of Mellette County. It couldn't be and be factual. Conditions and circumstances placed just about everyone in a like situation. Only the topography of your particular homestead and the little daily personal incidents made the view from your shack and your life any different from your neighbors—who very probably were some distance away, and in some cases, miles. There was little in the way of fences, nor anything that could really be called a road. However, in abundance were rattlesnakes and wild cattle, that is, Indian cattle, that roamed the range at will.

It was to this setting the Art Mountain family arrived in the spring of 1912, coming from near Omaha, Nebr. The means of conveyance was horse and buggy. At that time the family consisted of Art, his wife, Hilma, and their two and one-half year old son, Paul—the author of this narrative.

We found our claim to be located nine miles west of White River on Pine Creek and soon had a number of homesteader neighbors in the area. Some of those I remember were Mr. and Mrs. Jake Lowen, Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Smith, Mr. and Mrs. Noble Wickland, Mr. and Mrs. Glen Kingsbury, Mr. and Mrs. George Waltz, Mr. and Mrs. Charlie Johnson, Jack Ryan, Hartford Kolb and Herb Garder.

Many of these early day homesteaders found the country and conditions not to their liking and stayed only long enough to prove up on their claim; thus the ones who stayed found their neighbors to be fewer and farther between.

I would not miss making mention of a few of the true natives, our Indian friends in the Pine Creek area, the Henrys, Castaways, Fire Clouds and White Horses.

This prairie life was a new experience for my parents, they having operated a Barber Shop and Confectionary Store in Nebraska. However, this very fact was a deterrent to keeping the proverbial wolf at bay during those lean years as Dad would ride a horse to White River every Saturday morning and work for Ernie McLean in his Barber Shop all day, many times they worked until midnight and Dad would get home about 2:00 A. M. on Sunday.

The highlight of my young life came in 1914 when my parents made a trip to North Dakota with a covered wagon and four horses. Dad worked in the harvest fields and Mother cooked for the threshing crew. This trip took ten days to two weeks each way and was a great adventure for me.

In these days schools were few and far between and I was seven years old before the Pine Creek school was started with Jimmy Coyle as the teacher. There were six pupils, Eleanor and Foster Waltz, Russell, George and Arla Keller and myself. Soon after this the Keller family became our nearest neighbors and for many years our very good friends. Some of my most cherished memories concern this fine family.

Although we were never burned out I shall never forget the fearful apprehension with which we watched the great billowing clouds of smoke by day, the sky red at night from the big and oft-times unchecked prairie fires of those early days.

**The first Pine Creek School, 1916. Front row** (left to right): Eleanor Waltz, Paul Mountain, Arla Keller, Foster Waltz. **Back row:** The teacher, Jimmy Coyle, holding his niece, Elizabeth Wilder, George Keller, and Russell Keller.

Murdo was the nearest railroad point and most of White River's supplies were freighted from there by wagons and four horse teams. As was the custom of many homesteaders during the 'teens, each fall my Dad would take a wagon load of hogs to Murdo and haul back a load of coal, part of which would go to the Bohannen Lumber Yard and a smaller amount brought on home to be conserved for the very coldest nights during the winter. Winter time temperatures of 35 below zero were not uncommon and I remember it once dropped to 47 below. In addition to wood, many of the old timers will no doubt remember cow chips as another source of fuel in those first years.

As a young man, my dad had learned to play trombone and there was nothing he would rather do than blow his horn. When the Bent Q Cowboy Band was started in White River under the direction of Dr. F. E. Bouza, Dad became an avid supporter and member. About this time he traded a cow to Al Smith for an old cornet, which he hoped I would learn to play—and I eventually did. Driving those 18 miles into town and back at night for band practice, especially in the winter time, was not exactly a picnic, since the mode of travel was still horse and buggy.

In November 1921, my brother Gordon was born on the ranch with Dr. Bouza and Mrs. Keller in attendance. Two years later my twin brothers, John and James, were born. It was not until after this time that the Mountain family acquired their first automobile, a 1914 model Studebaker, which vehicle helped (sometimes) me get a high school education.

My parents moved from White River to Kansas in 1937, where Dad bought and operated a Barber Shop until the time of his death in March 1946. Mother passed away in March 1960 and they both are buried at LeRoy, Kansas.

My wife, Caroline, son Burl and I were the last Mountains to leave White River in 1939, going to Mitchell, S. D., where we have resided since.

Gordon is retiring from the Navy this spring (1961) with 22 years' service. John works for the Meadow Gold Dairy Products, Inc., in Emporia, Kans., and

James is employed by Pheasants, Inc., in Mitchell. I have for the past 11 years been on the staff of the Methodist Hospital as chief engineer.

In a narrative of this type, of necessity, many happenings in the life of a family, their friends and community are omitted but certainly not forgotten. To those "Old Timers" who are still living on this 50th Anniversary of Mellette County, greetings and may you have nostalgic memories as you think back to the homestead days. To this writer it will always be home.

# Memories and Observations of an Immigrant Girl

**Mrs. Emily Mueller**

It was on December 9, 1901, when I, as a very young immigrant girl from Germany, was first introduced to South Dakota. I came by stage coach from Stewart, Nebr. (nearest railroad station), to Bonesteel, S. D., my destination. For the first time no Red Cross lady was on hand who would call my name, reveal her identity as a Red Cross worker and I in return show my personal identification as I had done at previous stops enroute. I suddenly realized I was completely on my own. I was entirely unable to understand the English language but I caught the word "Hotel." Seeing my trunk and traveling bag checked out, I felt reassured and followed them.

I remember a little of my trip on the stage coach to Bonesteel that might give you an idea of how things in Dakota looked to a complete stranger. There was a kind, friendly lady on the stage who tried to help me when she noticed I had a problem. I tried to tell her I could not locate my shoe button hook. She could not understand me but saw my predicament and loaned me a button hook with which to button my neat high button shoes. There were also two men passengers besides the driver and us on the stage. We stopped at a place called "Butte," for dinner. In the customary, polite fashion that I had been taught, I refused food the first time it was passed expecting it would be passed around again. But this courteous gesture was not in practice here so I started to learn a little of the American ways the hard way.

They changed horses at a place called "The Mill" and I wondered how much longer the trip would last. I wished that something would happen to break the monotony. It did! A horsebacker rode out from somewhere in the hills. The driver turned around and said something to us, which sounded to me like "Keep your hair on your head." Could it be an Indian? What about my wavy auburn hair? I had read in books a while back in Germany about dangerous Western adventures. However nothing happened; in fact, I found the Indians to be friendly later on.

When I arrived at the hotel, I entered the lobby and heard a voice speaking my name! Imagine my joy — it was my brother whom I had not seen for over ten years. He had been notified by the immigration officers that I had left Chicago and so had been on the lookout for me.

(Incidently, the kindly Postmaster who directed me to the hotel, was Mr. Crabtree. Forty-six years later, I learned that he was the father of Mrs. Myrtle Briggs, wife of our Methodist minister, Rev. Irvin Briggs, in White River, S. D., from 1947 to 1951.)

We left Bonesteel for another ride of three miles to where my brother's family was visiting her parents. There I stepped into the first sod house I had ever seen. I was to learn later that this house was large for a sod house, having three large rooms. It was so homelike, clean and inviting. I felt their kind hospitality was a wonderful welcome to Dakota. I began to realize how far away I was now from my own two sisters — 26 days of travel.

We went on two more miles over more hills to my brother's home. As we traveled, I heard coyotes howling for the first time. I thought that it was packs of wolves but nobody seemed to get alarmed and later the howl of the coyote became a familiar sound to me.

Brother's home was also a sod house with walls spotlessly white-washed and geraniums blooming in the deep window ledges.

Later on, I worked for a time on a farm to earn money to pay for my traveling expenses. I went with those folks in a lumber wagon to attend church services in a sod church building. It was built on a flat and located approximately three miles east of Fairfax, S. D. All of the families who attended usually came in lumber wagons or top buggies and the horses were generally unhitched and tied to the back of the wagon to eat the hay that had been brought along to feed them, while we attended services.

What homesteaders lacked in conveniences they made up for in ingenuity. The milk was put in gallon syrup buckets and hung down in the well to keep it cool. The cream was skimmed off and churned in a wooden dasher churn.

The butter was traded in at the store for groceries and hardware. In those days the general stores carried everything from dry goods and groceries to barbed wire and buggy whips. Since there was not enough home market for butter, it was usually put all together (regardless of quality, in colors varying from off-white to any shade of yellow) into a wooden tub or container with a cover. This was kept in the back of the store in a cool corner.

Most of the water was hard and we caught all the rain water we could in a barrel. We took pride in ironing our ruffled, glossy sunbonnets.

A new era started with the coming of the cream separator. The small sod houses gladly made room for it. It was considered a miracle. The housewives made butter and had regular butter customers. By now the railroad had extended to Bonesteel so they could ship cream for a cash return.

With the coming of the railroad, town lots were selling fast and a land boom was on.

A big adventure in the fall was the threshing when large crews of men went from place to place to thresh the grain. I helped cook for threshers. I had worked out in Fairfax at a restaurant where I learned how to make good, fluffy, baking-powder dumplings and was eager to demonstrate. The lady let me fix them and the threshers did not seem to see anything else on the

**Mrs. Emily Mueller and grandson, with Delbert and Milton in White River, 1953.**

table. We were busy refilling bowls and platters. It was a jolly crowd and the men and women both enjoyed the threshing days.

Many of the older girls also worked in the field. I had had no experience with horses since I had lived where the men had complete charge of them. But here, I learned to plow with four horses, fearfully at first, especially when I turned the corners and the inside horse would step over his tug. I was scared to get behind the horse to untangle him and hook up again. Eventually I learned to make good corners. Wages were eight dollars per month and it was slow paying off the cost of my trip. Tired, homesick at night, I would slip off over the hill out of sight to pray. The Lord Jesus became my personal Saviour and the peace that the world can neither give nor take away was mine. Comforted and strengthened, I could return to face another day.

The Rosebud Reservation land opening began in 1904 with registration at Fairfax, Bonesteel and Chamberlain. Land seekers poured into the country. My husband-to-be, Charlie Mueller, drew a claim.

Soon each quarter section was all taken and we were married and moved into our 12 x 14 shack. I papered it with newspapers and magazines and put up the lace curtains that were a gift from the minister's wife, and our place looked real homelike.

Some of my wonderful neighbors were the Paul Killians, J. L. Straits, Julius Thoenes, and Browns.

Everyone had fireguards plowed around their buildings to protect them from prairie fires. Our house was 40 rods from the Nebraska state line. I remember one time, later on, many men were fighting a big fire. I took my baby and went back on an old plowed field for safety, but the smoke was terrible. When all was past, after dark you could still see the partially burning fence posts dangling on the wire. Our waving grassland had turned into blackened hills.

East and west of us was Indian land but to the south was well settled Nebraska. Ponca Creek and the three-mile strip, before it was surveyed, furnished a beautiful camp meeting and picnic ground. Before the two bridges were built that spanned the creek, they forded the Ponca on their way to Naper, Nebr., at a different crossing. When we could not attend our church at Fairfax, we drove to a lovely country church less than a mile away. It was a beautiful sight to see neighbors and friends traveling on various trails coming past the school house at the foot of Mount Zion and coming up to the Mount Zion Free Methodist Church. There you would meet Grandma Chastin (affectionately called "Aunt Martha" by all) wearing her slat sunbonnet. You could depend on her sweet voice in the singing and also on the good baritone of the retired Rev. Sidney Mills. He used to call their home in that beautiful valley along the creek, his little Jerusalem.

It was from this "Aunt Martha" that I learned so many housekeeping and nursing methods. I learned to salt down corn and green beans, scald down plums in large amounts, make good jell without pectin. We had wild fruit of every kind.

Colds did not stay long when we used remedies that "Aunt Martha" had tested, such as applications of goose grease, medicines like onion syrup, catnip tea, and other home remedies.

In 1909, I recall we had a celebration in Bonesteel and part of it was a parade of some of the first cars. The highlight of the parade was the car of our visiting Governor Vessey. (You will recall that he was Governor at the time Mellette County was organized, on November 25, 1911. W. R.)

In 1921 or 1922 we came to Wood, S. D., to attend a fair. Indians from all over the Reservation were gathered there for a three-day celebration. A huge tent was set up by the Congregational Church where the ladies served meals. I had the privilege to help cook. Soliciting food had been done in advance. I had charge of the meat, which was a huge roast, gravy, potatoes, and coffee.

We all stepped out to witness the Indians' parade in full regalia. That was the top of the entertainment and all of the visiting tourists had something to write home about.

Later on, we moved to Mellette County to a farm in the Cody neighborhood.

By this time White River had become famous for its Frontier Days, usually held in August. Here again the Indian population contributed a large share of attraction and entertainment, especially for the tourists and visitors. Their camping ground, north of White River, looked like a city of tents.

**During celebration at White River, Aug. 18, 1961. Left to right: Mrs. Roxy Raffensperger and Mrs. Emily Mueller wearing Centennial dresses.**

Frontier Days served as an annual sort of a homecoming when relatives and friends planned to come back to visit folks at White River during those days. Carnivals and all sorts of stands provided entertainment on the streets and the excellent rodeo, held in the Frontier grounds north of town, highlighted the occasion.

In 1942, when we lived near the Little White River north of town, the melting of the heavy winter snow caused a spring flood. We were on dry ground but the river in changing its course had cut underground and large trees fell into the raging waters to be gone with the strong current. Milton and I were trying to save what we could — our new white range that was still in the crate, keepsakes and day-old chicks. Toward evening Mr. Bordeaux, our nearest neighbor, came to help. Little Cleve helped me carry up canned fruits from the cave. It was an extremely risky task because any minute, it too might go like our buildings. The haystack, turkeys, and a large pile of sawed logs for firewood had already disappeared into the angry waters. We will never forget the kindness of our neighbors during our plight. How nice it felt when Mr. Becker and Rosemarie walked over, offering us shelter and food at their house. When Mr. Becker and Milton were taking chickens out of the chicken house, it suddenly leaned over and with a few squawks from the chickens, it too, was all gone into a watery grave. Delbert and Waldo were on their way home from Rapid City. They had to detour by way of Presho and Mission to White River as the Westover Bridge was impassable due to the flood. At 3:00 A. M., they ran out of gas just a few rods from what would have been a deep drop into that angry current. Their flashlight showed them a story of disaster and as soon as it was daylight they traced us to Beckers' home. How thankful I was when I heard their voices at 5:00 A. M. This disaster occurred along the Little White River near the present route of highway 83.

In South Dakota, free range gave way to homesteaders, and homesteaders gave way to diversified farming and large ranches.

Times have changed in Mellette County. People talk of traveling by helicopter in the same territory that was traveled by oxen and wagons just fifty years ago.

Through it all I remember the words of my dear little mother, spoken before she went to Heaven: "Remember, wherever you may be, the same Heaven is above us, and the same Heavenly Father is watching over us all."

(Mrs. Mueller did not tell us about her work during the time she lived in Mellette County. She was known far and wide as a kind and competent practical nurse. Many of the people have told me stories of their gratitude for her help in times of sickness and trouble. Her home was also made beautiful with her flowers, also many crocheted and other hand-made articles. Perhaps her modesty prevented her from mentioning her part in caring for the sick, but no story about her would be complete without speaking of it, so I am taking the liberty to do so. W. R.)

# Homesteading and Teaching

**By Mrs. Etta Navin**

I, too, was an old-time homesteader when Mellette County was young.

In 1915, I homesteaded about 17 miles straight west of White River on the east half of Section 35 42-32.

My name was Etta M. Cash then. I taught school four years, going back and forth to hold down my claim, after I filed on it.

In 1913, before I homesteaded, I was the first teacher of the Schaeffer School. This school was held in a rented log building and the pupils were Tobias Herrmann, Lloyd Best, and the Shaeffer children. The location of this school is in the vicinity of the present town of Mosher, S. D.

In 1915-1916, I taught the Dengler School. The school was held in Susie Dengler's homestead shack. Some of the pupils were Caroline Dengler, Gladys McCauley, Verna and Vera Cash, the Frazier children, the Gregor children, and Alfred Terrill.

Schaeffer School, 1913

Cars in 1911 in Mellette County.
Note right side steering wheels.

In 1916-1917, I taught the Surprise Valley School. In May 1917, at the close of their school terms, my school and the Cedar Butte School, taught by Myrtle Mullen, had a get-together picnic at Bill Henning's place near Cedar Butte. Some of those who attended were Bill Henning, Gladys Parks, Grandma Patnoe and Clarence, Hans Christenson and family, Mr. and Mrs. Jim John, Bert Butterfield and family, J. W. Beckwith and family, Mr. and Mrs. Chaney and Reed, J. H. Parker and family, Gresham family, Kelly family, Alice and

School picnic of Cedarbutte and Surprise Valley Schools, told about in story.

Gladys McCauley, Lilly, Martha, and Gus Anderson, Ida Freeland, Philip Benson, Joe Cash, and Chester Dodds.

The term of 1917-1918, I taught the Cedar Butte School, and in 1918-1919 I taught the Dengler School again. They had a new school building this time, located west of Grandpa Dengler's homestead.

I proved up on my homestead then and Mr. Navin and I were married in 1919. Mr. Navin was a real estate dealer and we made our home in White River.

My homestead was about a mile south of J. W. Beckwith's homestead. The first Cedar Butte Post Office and store were on the Beckwith homestead. Mr. Beckwith was the first postmaster and the Beckwiths were my nearest neighbors.

The Dengler School, 1915.
Etta Cash (Navin), teacher.

Joe Cash (Mrs. Navin's brother) and Frank Perry at Reutters, 1954.

Mellette County Boosters. C. E. Kell (hands on hips at right) is still lawyer in White River, serving 50 years in October, 1961.

# The Nielsen Story

### By Ruth Nielsen

We moved to our present ranch home north of White River on March 27, 1927, from Lynch, Nebr.—Mads and I with our two little girls, Thelma and Donna Faye. We moved into a one-room house which had been Waceks' homestead shack. Later that spring we built on another room.

**Mr. and Mrs. Mads Nielsen**

The very next day after our arrival, Mads left for Nebraska after another load of our things. Joe and Florence Green, who had come up the summer before, were with us. Soon it started to snow . . . the roads got bad and telephone lines were down. Mr. Nielsen didn't get back for almost two weeks.

It kept on snowing, the roof leaked and snow blew in around the windows and doors until the only dry spot in the house was under the bed. The girls were small and couldn't understand why we were staying in this strange place.

In those days we all baked our own bread. So one day when we ran short of supplies, Florence Green and I took the girls and went to town in a lumber wagon after flour and groceries. The horses were so thin that it was a slow, hard trip but we made it there and back.

It was rather lonesome for a time but we soon got acquainted with some of the neighbors and we have been good friends all through the years. Not many of the older neighbors live here now. Several moved to White River and some to other places.

**Ready for a sleighride. Charley Findley with Nielsen girls.**

**Watermelon feast at Fred Lindquists, 1947.**

The next year we built a corn crib. We also dug a cistern as we didn't like to haul water from the river or from town.

In the 1930's it turned very dry. We had to put our cattle out to pasture near Norris. We kept only three milk cows at home, two hogs and 25 hens, and got along the best we could. When times got better, we had crops again.

**Mads Nielsen on grain binder, 1918.**

We did all the farm work in those years with horses. We worked with eight head on the disk. They were turned out at night so we had to bring them all in the next morning, which made more chores along with our milking of 10 or 12 cows.

Some of our neighbors, Otto Hansons, Bill Knutsons, and Tom Stranges, moved away during the dry years.

Soon after 1936 things began to get better. We had better crops and prices. All of our small grain was cut by the binder and shocked by hand in the field. Then we threshed, sometimes for eight or ten days. Now the grain is all combined in a very short time.

We are still on our ranch and enjoy living there.

* * *

Murdo: White River Mail and Stage Line. Leaves White River daily at 5:00 a.m. Arrive at Murdo at 12. Leaves Murdo daily at 1:00 p.m. Arrive at White River at 7:00 p.m. Passengers Fare, $2.00. Gottfried Picker, Proprietor. (Murdo Coyote, 1912)

# "News" From Carter

**By J. H. New**

In September 1914, I came to South Dakota from Kansas, having arranged a partnership deal with Martin K. Nolan on his farm in southeastern Mellette County. Mr. Nolan was postmaster in Winner at that time.

On September 13, 1914, my brother-in-law, John Fruh, and I arrived in Winner with two emigrant cars loaded with 13 cattle, three horses, four mules, farm machinery, and household goods. After unloading the two cars and storing the machinery in Winner, we loaded our wagons and started for Mellette County, trailing the cattle. We got as far as Jordan the first night and put up at Ray Antes' livery stable. The next day we continued our journey and arrived at our destination in Mellette County, September 15, P. M.

The only building on the place was a double granary and corn crib. So our home for a short time was in one of the empty grain bins, 10 x 16 feet. Construction on the house was started immediately, and we were able to get moved in before the cold weather started.

My wife followed, in about three weeks, with our two babies, Cecelia, age two (now Mrs. Bert Tideman, living at Carter), and Alvin, age four months (now operating the home place). Our next son, Jack, was born in 1917 and now lives on his farm adjoining the home place; and Julia Marie, also born in Mellette County in 1922, is now Mrs. Donald Hendrickson of Winner.

Big Spuds, 1915

We remained in Mellette County until March 1924. Then we moved one and one-half miles west, just across the line in Todd County, which has been our home ever since. Needless to say, our experiences during those early ten years were many and varied. At that time graveled roads were not heard of and very few roads had ever seen a grader. Most were just prairie trails. Practically all transportation was horse-drawn, as cars and trucks were not very numerous. All freighting was done with four or six horses and usually with two wagons coupled together. When a farmer had a carload of wheat or hogs to go to market, the neighbors would pool their outfits and haul the entire carload to Winner in one trip. That was what you called "co-operation." Cattle were driven to Winner by horseback which would take two days.

In the winter of 1914-1915, we had a lot of heavy snow; the roads to Winner were packed with snow about two feet deep. After each snow, travel would resume, which packed down just a little more snow on the road. On Good Friday, 1915, which was about the last of March, I went to Winner with a four-horse team to get some lumber and supplies. That day a chinook wind started blowing and cutting the snow. As I started back that Saturday morning, I planned on getting home that same evening, but the snow was getting pretty slushy by then so that the wagons started to cut through part of the time. Sometimes we would be riding on top and sometimes on the bottom. Sometimes one wheel on top and others on bottom at the same time! That's when safety belts would have come in handy to hold you onto the spring seat. I got as far as one mile west of Jordan by night and decided to leave the wagons and go back to Jordan for the night. Easter Sunday was a bright and balmy day; the snow had pretty well disappeared and the country was one big lake. I had little difficulty traveling the balance of the way until I got a half mile from home. The White Horse Creek was out of its banks and impossible to cross. So I unhitched the horses from the wagon and stayed the next two nights at the T. M. Thomas ranch just a mile south. That was my first real experience pioneering in Mellette County.

Others living in this neighborhood at that time, besides Mr. and Mrs. Thomas, included the Frank Nicolaisens, William Colombes, in Todd County, the Schaeffer family, Anton Anderson and Lee Dunkle, the Raymond Best family, Charles and Milt Cordes, Ben Charamza, Claude Sills, the Sinkler family, Frank Kestel family, J. T. Hansen family and others whom I cannot recall at present.

Our mail service at that time was also of the horse and buggy type. Lee Dunkle ran a stage coach from Winner to Carter and would get the mail to Carter about noon. The late Bert Humphrey of White River

Picnic on the Keyapaha, 1917

was the carrier from Carter to White River. Bert would leave White River in the morning with two ponies and a two-wheeled cart and come as far as Wood, where he would change ponies and continue on to Carter. There he would meet the Winner mail and head back for Wood, delivering mail along his route, change ponies again at Wood and continue on to White River. Later Bert got a Model T, stripped off the fenders and top, and then it never made any difference what the weather or roads were like (actually there were no roads), Bert Humphrey got through with the mail!

Harvesting was also quite different in those days. All grain was cut with a binder and shocked in the field. Later it was hauled in, stacked and threshed whenever we could get a machine. In the early years that was sometimes in December or January as there were very few threshing rigs at that time. J. G. Brown of Valentine, Nebr., had a big Case outfit and would work down this way, getting here in December or later. This went on for a while until four neighbors formed a company and bought a 24-inch Minneapolis separator, which we pulled with a two cylinder 15-30 Hart Parr tractor that Mr. Nolan and I purchased to do our farm work with. This made quite an improvement in both our threshing and farm operations.

"New" car, 1917

In the fall of 1916 we bought our first car—a 1917 Model T, touring car complete with top, side curtains and Bosch magneto for a total price of $444.00. And I am sure we got more enjoyment out of that car than any we have had since.

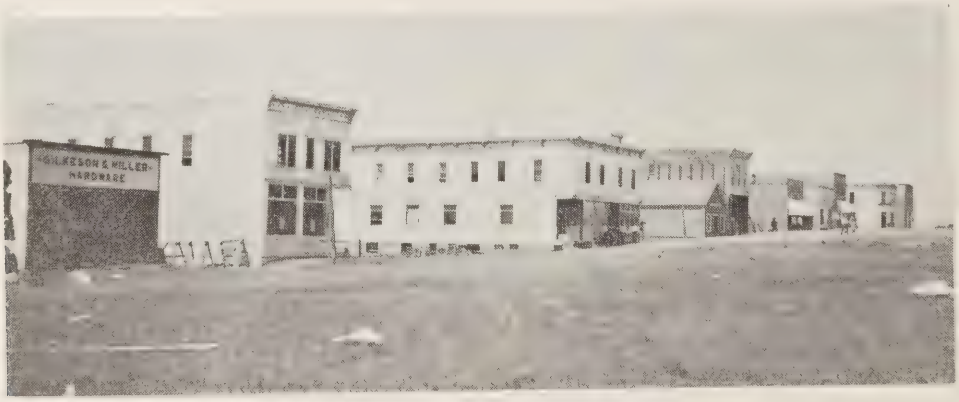
Education was also somewhat of a problem those days. Our nearest school was four miles away, but by angling across the prairies, as there were not many fences at that time, it shortened the distance some. We purchased an old pony and the three older children rode three on one pony. We had a rope tied onto the horn with a loop on the other end to use as an extra stirrup to aid in mounting, since the regular stirrup was too high for the children to reach. One day they came walking home and said their pony had stumbled and fell but couldn't get up again. So the faithful pony had served its time and had to be killed to end its suffering.

Just one more experience I would like to mention before closing. One Fourth of July morning (I don't remember what year this was), we were awakened early by a knock on the door. We found a family of several people, all wet and cold, who said they had run off the bridge across White Horse Creek. It had been raining and the roads were muddy so they had slid off of the end of the bridge. The car had landed on its side in the water. Fortunately, no one was injured but all were pretty wet and shook up. After getting them dried off and fed, with the help of neighbors we got their car straightened up and pulled back onto the road. No damage was done to the car and after some drying off the people were on their way. I don't remember their names or where they were from.

**The Car in the Creek**

I would like to say a few words about the town of Carter as that was our main trading point before the days of the automobile. I don't know what the population of Carter was in 1914, but a list of the business houses included two banks, two grocery stores, a hardware, a drug store, a hotel, two saloons, two livery stables, two lumber yards, a blacksmith shop, a garage, a barber shop, a weekly newspaper (The Carter News), and a doctor. Today, Carter boasts two filling stations, one grocery store, a Post Office with two rural routes, and the J. R. Martin Insurance Agency.

We are proud to have spent these few years in Mellette County, and want to say that second only to Todd County, Mellette County is "Tops."



Carter, 1914

# The Ted Niemann Story

**By Mrs. Ted Niemann**

We, Ted Niemann and wife, Carrie, with our three children, Lawrence, Vera and Lucille, came to Mellette County in 1927. We bought the Ray Briggs homestead which was seven miles southeast of White River. We came from Gregory.

Our children were all under school age and they finished their schooling in Mellette County. Our son, Lawrence, went to college in Rapid City.

We had some hardships living in Mellette County. I took up sewing to help put the children through school. I also boarded the school teachers.

My husband worked with a road gang while the children and I did the chores at the farm. Sometimes he only got home on week-ends. My husband's favorite sport was hunting coyotes, and in the spring the children would go out to find the dens. If they found one, they would dig out the coyote pups.

We raised turkeys a few years, but finally had to sell them at a dollar each so there wasn't much money in that.

Ted Nieman bringing in a coyote.

We enjoyed dancing and went to many dances and had good times.

Fishing was also one of our sports. We would get together with neighbors and friends often.

We sold our farm in 1940 and came back to Gregory where we still live.

# The Spirit of Homesteading

**By Joanna Nolan**

In August 1912, I came to live on my claim, 15 miles southwest of White River.

I bought the lumber for my shack in White River as well as some household equipment and supplies. I hired it all freighted out to my homestead.

I lived in a tent until the shack was built. First, I had a hole dug and a large wooden box set in it for a cellar. Then, after the shack was built over it, I cut a hole in the floor between the joists for a doorway to my little cellar. I just about had to go into this cellar head first, but it kept things from freezing in the winter and cool in the summer.

I had a cistern dug and filled with water that was hauled from a pond two miles away. This was for household use and to water my horse. I hauled my drinking water from Castor's Springs, four miles away.

I am sending you a number of pictures. One is of the first homesteaders' picnic in 1912. I can only identify three or four but perhaps someone out White River way can remember more of those people.

Good luck to you. . . . It must be quite a job to get all the homesteaders' stories together.

**"The Spirit of Homesteading." Joanna (Smith) Nolan planting oats, April 1913, on her Mellette County homestead, 15 miles southwest of White River.**

**Thanksgiving dinner guests, 1912.** Nellie (McDonald) Grimes, Mr. and Mrs. Morris and daughter, Jake Meyers, Emma (Bruce) Peterson, John Falk, Joanna (Smith) Nolan and others.

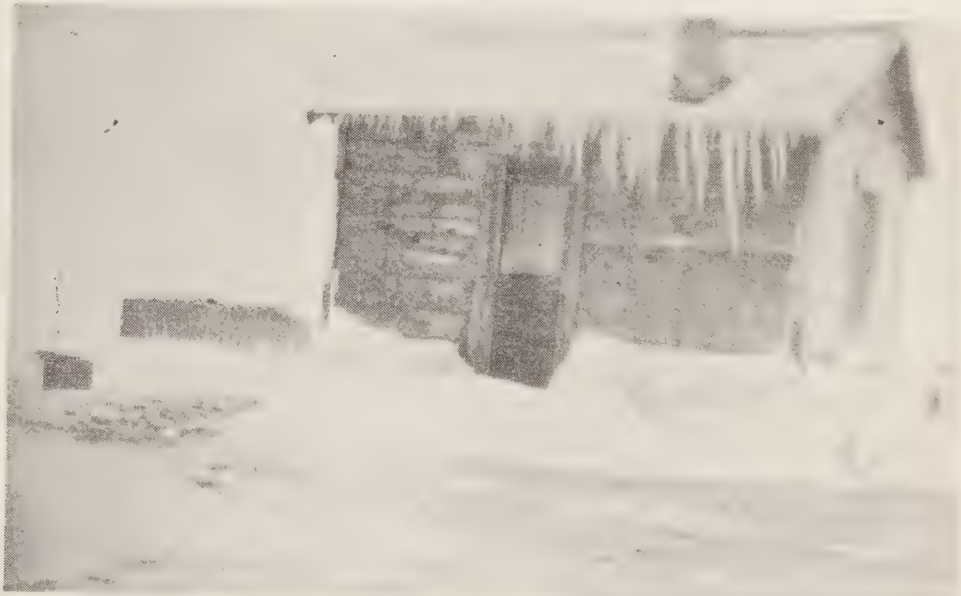
Homesteaders
Picnic
1912

FIRST HOMESTEADERS PICNIC 1912
MELLETTE CO S.D.

FIRST HOMESTEADERS PICNIC 1912.
MELLETTE CO S.D.

FIRST HOMESTEADERS PICNIC 1912

Gus Larson, John Falk, Nellie (McDonald) Grimes, Joanna (Smith) Nolan, Mr. Morrow, Mrs. Morrow, Jake Neyns, Emma (Bruce) Peterson



Winter on the homestead, April 8, 1913.

# Homesteading in Happy Hollow

**By Bismark Nollsch**

I was born in Illinois on July 7, 1877, and I came to South Dakota in March 1910.

I worked on a farm until threshing time, then tended separator on a threshing rig for J. M. Daniels of Dixon, S. D. We went around threshing for 56 days, which was a long run. I returned to Illinois for the winter. I came back to South Dakota in the spring of 1911 and farmed for two years, but crops were poor so I sold out in the fall of 1912.

I bought a relinquishment in Mellette County in January 1913. When I moved out to my claim, I found that the shack had been torn down and hauled away. I had a young lad with me by the name of Paul Sjoholm from Gregory, and having no house, we made our bed under the wagon.

Next morning I visited my nearest neighbor, Carl Sorensen and he told me where the most of the lumber out of my house had gone. So I started to look around. Those that had taken most of the lumber returned it, and the gentleman that had borrowed my door and windows was glad to break some sod for me.

Then there was a fair homestead lady, Miss Fox, who was leaving so I bought her 10 x 12 shack. Lige Graham and Tom Gallagher helped me move it to my homestead. I called my homestead "Triple Butte Ranch."

It was a lot of fun homesteading. By the way, I don't want to forget to mention a Miss Grace Brown. She was full of fun and used to write the news for the Wood paper signing it "By Uncle Rufus." She helped a great deal with the Sunday School which was held in a homestead shack. They put me in for Sunday School

**Bis Nollsch shack. Harry Goodman and Walter Bast, 1913**

superintendent and I kept the job until the spring of 1921 when we moved to Huron, S. D.

Miss Brown named our community the Happy Hollow. We all wanted a church so some of the neighbors hauled the lumber from Valentine, Nebr. It was built on the corner across from N. A. Gerig's place. Gerig married a fine young lady from Indiana and they called their homestead the "Indiana ranch."

John Glatfelter built the Happy Hollow church. Walter Bast, a young man from Illinois, and all the rest of us helped. Walter also built a large barn for Jim Hardy. Rev. Van Valkenburgh was our minister when we built the church. He also had a homestead west of White River. Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Housman were good helpers. Both are deceased now. Ward and Ruth Housman both live in Huron, S. D. Ward has one daughter and is employed by the Armour Packing Company. Ruth is Mrs. Julius Johannson. They live in Huron and have a son, Jimmie.

One thing I would not want to forget about homesteading days was our faithful mail man, Bert Humphrey. He was always on the job, rain or shine. One cold morning he got as far as my place. His old stripped-down Model T played out. He asked me if I would take him to White River, a distance of about nine miles. So I got my team and pulled the car to White River, and was he ever happy. It was a good chance to charge him ten dollars but I never charged him a dime because he never charged me for rides. He took me to Mission once. One time in February 1914, I was on my way to Winner, S. D., with a load of corn. Bert overtook me six miles west of Carter and it sure was storming. He said, "Can you make it, Bis, or shall I stay with you?" I told him to go on and I made it. He used to bring me groceries from Joe Brown's store in Wood. He would set them on my step by the door. Once there was a slab of bacon in the box that he left when I wasn't home. I had a sow with her pigs that were running around the yard. She ate the bacon but left the rest for me. Nice of the hog, wasn't it?

Al Moorhouse and I used to chase coyotes. Al had a hound. I shot one coyote while I was homesteading.

I used to freight from Winner to Wood for Joe Brown and some for Hollands at White River. In the winter of 1921, I earned over $400.00 freighting for the Anderson Lumber Company.

I helped George Schambacker fence his homestead. George and I used to celebrate our birthdays together. Jim Mitchell, McCauley, Homer Wilson, Al Moorhouse and I usually made up the election board. I used to buy bread and butter from Mrs. Carl Sorensen. Frank Jarboe was a very prominent neighbor. We all liked him and often took his advice.

In the fall of 1915, I believe, we had a big prairie fire. It started down south of Happy Hollow on a Sunday afternoon. I got on my saddle horse and took material to fight fire. We fought until midnight and it seemed the fire was headed toward the river so I started wearily home. By the time I was one mile from home, the wind changed. So I kept on riding until I had all my neighbors awake and we sure did fight fire. I had 160 acres of hay in stacks and if they had burned I surely would have been in a fix, because I had just bought 26 head of cattle. After I got some of the neighbors up, Mrs. Gerig had coffee and lunch ready for me; then she rode over to John Gretchmanns to wake them.

In October 1918, I was married to Nellie E. Housman. Our three oldest boys, Glen H., Harry E., and Everett B., were born before we left Mellette County.

Since we left there, our family increased one more, son Roy. He has been in the U. S. service 18 years and has a family of four boys. We also have four daughters: Joy Perdue is in Idaho, has three sons and two daughters; our daughter, Phyllis, Mrs. Jack Harper, has two sons, and is in England; then Genevieve Lielrg has four sons and two daughters; our youngest daughter, Carol, is a registered nurse and lives at home with us. We are very proud of our family. Glen died in April 1951. Rev. Harry and wife and four children live in Hot Springs, S. D. Rev. Everett, wife and three daughters live in Orange, Calif. We have 24 grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

I am 83 years of age, but I still remember happy days in Happy Hollow.

**Mr. and Mrs. Bis Nollsch. He is 83 and still working for the North Western Engineering Co. at Rapid City.**

**Item from Murdo Coyote of 1912:**

It seems that the automobile people should be thoughtful enough to slow up — especially when a person holds up his hands. It might save a damage bill, also save many an accident as all teams are not broken to be around cars!

# Farming Near Prosperity Flats

**By Helen Strait Olson**

I am not a homesteader, but we didn't do much different than the homesteaders when we came to Mellette County because we came to a bare quarter of Indian land.

We bought the land in 1921; I believe it was the Many Horses allotment. We had planned to put up some fence and buildings before spring, but winter set in early so nothing could be done. We were then living in Gregory County near Bonesteel, S. D. In March, Van wrote to the Indian Department in Rosebud for permission to rent the Charging Alone Indian house that was on a quarter adjoining ours, so that we would have something to live in until we had a place of our own fixed up. In April, he still had not received an answer, but we decided to move out anyway and a fair sized tent was purchased to live in if we had to.

**Van Strait enroute to Mellette County. Hayrack, wagon and buggy, all loaded, 1922.**

On April 22, 1922, Van left with a hayrack pulled by four horses, and a wagon with two horses and two mules. This wagon was loaded with our household goods and personal possessions. Behind that wagon, the family buggy was tied, and it too, was loaded with small items. In the back of the buggy was a crate containing ten laying hens and a rooster. They were fed and watered and the eggs gathered during that five-day journey.

Van was two and one-half days getting to Winner. The next day after he left Gregory County, our 21 milk cows, one calf, and our machinery were loaded into a freight car at Bonesteel and shipped to Winner.

Charles Swift and Irwin Sterner of near Westover were in Winner to meet Van and help him drive the cattle and wagons out to his place.

On the way through Wood, Van called the Indian Agency and got permission to rent the empty Indian house that he had inquired about earlier.

On the morning of April 27th, our children (Marjorie, two years and ten months old, and James, one and one-half years old) and I left Bonesteel to join Van in Mellette County. We were accompanied by my brother-in-law, Ronda Strait. We traveled in our little one-seated, old Hupmobile car. We had our clothing with us in boxes and also a hen with 11 two-week-old chicks. And that is the way I started out to find the treasured piece of land in Mellette County that was ours.

After leaving Winner it seemed like it was all prairie, and it all began to look alike to me. With no speedometer on the car to register the miles, and traveling on poor roads, it seemed to me that we must have missed the town of Wood somewhere along the line. We stopped to inquire only to find out we still had nearly ten miles to go to get there.

When we finally arrived in Wood, we were directed northwest on the Wood to Westover trail to go to our place.

How lucky we felt, when in mid-afternoon we caught up with the loaded wagons and cattle that had stopped at the Bob Owens place. We, and our stock, were well fed by the Owens and were given a most happy welcome to Mellette County.

While we were still at Owens, Mr. and Mrs. Chris Wolf came over and also welcomed the newcomers. I arranged for setting hens and eggs from Mrs. Wolf so I could get started raising chickens.

Wagons, cattle, and the old Hupp left the Owens place a little after 4:00 P. M. for the last two miles to the place we would call home. It was a beautiful April day. When we got to the Indian house, things moved fast. A small corral there was quickly repaired to hold the cows. A spring a short distance away provided water. A stove was immediately set up to heat water and cook on.

Curiosity kept the little ones on the run exploring the new place and the fear of rattlesnakes was constantly on our minds. Beds were set up and the children were told to stay near them until the cleaning and some of the unpacking was done. We, two, worked around the clock that night cleaning the house, repairing the screen door so snakes could not get in, unpacking, and moving into our house.

Our horses had been hobbled so they could graze but not stray too far from the place.

The little ones were wide awake with excitement when Van and I went to milk at 5:30 the next morning. They were put in the buggy near the corral where they could watch us milk and we would know where they were. We were milking 18 of the 21 cows. When we went to the house with the milk, a far-from-welcome rattler was on the porch to greet us.

Hot weather was coming on and we had no cave in which to keep the cream and milk. So we made a dugout near the spring. We made many trips back and forth to this dugout and it was a muddy spot but it kept the cream cool. I remember we kept overshoes near it to be used when we went into the cooler.

**Ready to go to Murdo!**

A well digger came the next morning. He spent nearly a day witching for water and the place he selected wasn't far from Van's first choice of where he wanted to put the buildings. A couple of days later, Van made a trip to Murdo, S. D., for well curbing, fencing material, boxes to set hens in, and many other things we needed. That was the beginning of many freighting trips that we made to and from Murdo.

The tent was put up and partitioned off for our laying and setting hens. By fall I had raised 327 chicks. These were raised by hens in boxes, under the porch, and any available place. Many times they had been brought into the house when it rained.

Van was very busy so I made most of the trips to Murdo with the cream twice a week. I usually went in the buggy unless lumber or fencing material was needed, then I would take the wagon pulled by two horses and two mules.

We always watered our horses, during these trips, at a well about a mile south of Murdo. Arriving in town, we would unhook the horses and tie them to the back of the buggy or wagon and feed them. These trips usually took from 12 to 14 hours, depending on the load we hauled. It was a distance of 22 miles from our place.

We rented three quarters of land so had quite a bit of fencing to do. The neighbors, Indians and whites alike, were all good and very helpful.

We put in a large sod garden and 80 acres were broke and put into corn. Van always used a team of eight, including six horses and two mules, in all of his field work when he could. This way he could farm faster and he was very particular about the care and welfare of his horses.

Six horses and two mules, team of Van Straits.

The corn crop was very good and, of course, we picked it by hand. The children were taken with us. A small two-wheeled cart was fixed and this was tied behind the wagon for them to play and sleep in. A good return was also had from the sod garden. One hundred and fifty quarts of vegetables were canned besides all we could eat and we took onions, tomatoes, potatoes, and melons to the market.

A two-room house was moved in from across the river. An all-cement cave was built with a wash house and storage space built over that. A new barn and hen house were also built by Van and his helpers during the summer.

The days were never long enough and I don't recall that we ever complained of being tired.

Financially we couldn't afford to use the old Hupmobile to travel in. Its last trip was the first time we went to Frontier Days in White River in August 1922. We took our lunch along and the makings of ice cream in a two-quart hand freezer. We pulled up near the old ice house, bought a quarter's worth of ice and froze our ice cream then and there. Then with friends, we went down on the river for a picnic lunch. After enjoying our first Frontier Day, seeing our first real rodeo, then going home in the evening and milking 21 cows, we felt we had a full day.

Van with his dogs and coyote hides.

We moved from the Indian house in the last of October to our own house. The Indians hauled in our winter's supply of wood and after the corn was picked, Van spent many hours sawing wood by hand. To save on wood, coal and corn cobs, many cow chips were picked up in those early years.

A good used second-hand car was purchased the following year. Time went on and we prospered. We farmed more and more, raised more chickens and turkeys and continued to milk 20 to 25 cows for many years.

I gathered wild hops to make a yeast starter for bread. I baked bread twice a week. The first loaf of bought bread we purchased in September of 1941, just as a sort of a novelty to see what it was like.

Marjorie, the oldest, was soon six years old and ready for school. A school house was moved into the northeast corner of our place in 1926. It was called the Strait School and Jessie Reinoehl was the first teacher.

On April 30, 1926, our daughter, Faith Lorraine, was born at home before the doctor arrived. Mrs. Emily Mueller, now of Pierre, S. D., helped in the home for several weeks. We had no telephone so getting a doctor out was slow.

The highlight of 1928 was getting an earphone battery radio set.

Crops were good. Van Strait was a good farmer and no weeds were allowed to grow. The dry years came in with the Thirties. With the beetles and grasshoppers to eat everything and no rains, there was little or no feed for the cattle. Our 138 head of cattle had to be nearly given away, prices were so low. This left us with only seven milk cows and two of those died in the fall. Having no debts we managed to hang on and in the spring of 1934 prospects looked better. Van would buy a cow and calf here and there and by fall we had 35 head again.

Windchargers for electricity were getting popular, so in 1937 we got one and had our first electricity for lights and radio.

In 1939, a large gas refrigerator was my birthday gift. Now I could make ice cream without running to the cave many times a day. We felt we were really living.

In 1940, we remodeled our home. In March of 1942, another daughter, Beverly Ann, was born.

In December 1944, I and my daughters, Faith and Beverly, moved to California to be near my father, A. C. Chapin, who was ill. He died suddenly of a heart attack five weeks after we moved out to California.

Several years later Van Strait passed away in South Dakota and is buried in the Murdo cemetery.

I lived in California until 1949, when I became the wife of B. A. Olson of White River and moved back to South Dakota.

B. A. was a mail carrier out of White River and I was given the job of substitute carrier. After his retirement in 1955, I was temporary carrier for a year and a half. B. A. passed away in September 1957. I still make my home in White River.

Beverly graduated from White River high school in 1960 and is now attending college at the State University at Vermillion, S. D.

The other two girls are married and live in California. Marjorie has two girls and lives in Fresno, Calif. Faith has two boys and lives in Encino, Calif.

James has four boys and two girls. He operates the Texaco filling station in Murdo, S. D.

This is a small sketch of my life from 1922 to 1961 I have had a very busy life and I still keep very busy with my grandchildren, church work, lodge, membership in several clubs and several hobbies.

One of my mottos is to live and love each day to its fullest.

# The Blizzard of March 13, 1913

**By Dorothy O'Rielly**

My sister and I homesteaded southwest of White River. I taught school in White River, S. D., in 1912 and 1913. My most vivid memory of those days was that unexpected blizzard in 1913. I am sending you some pictures of the king-sized drifts.

We were cousins of the druggist, L. M. (Doc) O'Reilly, who bought the drug store there after we left White River. For some reason "Doc" chose to spell his name "O'Reilly" while my grandfather and all of his other descendants spell their name "O'Rielly," as I do.

After leaving South Dakota, "Doc" had a drug store in Eagle Rock, Calif. He passed away suddenly in July of 1960 at Yellowstone Park when he was on a trip.

**Mary Coyle Wilder, Dorothy O'Rielly and Nellie McDonald with friends and puppies in snowdrifts at White River following March 13, 1913, blizzard.**

INDEPENDENT
LUMBER CO.

**Left to right: Miss McDonald, Grace Jones (?), Dorothy O'Rielly and Mary Coyle (Wilder). Blizzard of 1913 snowdrifts.**

# The Ozanne Story

**By Mr. and Mrs. Seth Ozanne**

Seth Ozanne says . . .

In September 1912, I filed on the southeast quarter of section 30 42-28, which was two miles east and one mile north of White River, S. D. I had to establish residence by February 23, 1913, so I left my home town of Elwood in Gosper County, Nebr., in a covered wagon early in February 1913. My brother, E. W. Ozanne, and a neighbor boy went with me. My wife and family, our two boys, one six years old and the other one and one-half years old, did not come out until later.

The weather was fine until we got to Meadsville, Nebr., on the Niobrara River, where a snowstorm held us up for two days. We started out again and got to White River before the deadline of February 23.

We dug a hole in a bank and put the extension wagon cover over it for a place to stay until we could get a house built.

Then we made a dugout barn with hay roof for the horses, but did not have the south side enclosed. My brother went back home then on March 12, 1913. On March 13 and 14, the big blizzard came. Our wagon cover and dugout were completely covered with snow. We didn't try to get out. We had plenty of wood in, so we had a good fire and it was nice and warm inside. As soon as the storm stopped, we dug our way out and found the horses almost buried in the snow; only their heads were out. We scooped them out and took them over to John Vicks barn, about a quarter mile away. His place joined mine on the south. That job of getting them through the deep snow took us nearly all day and it was dark by the time we got home.

As soon as we could get through the snow (that was quite a while, but I don't remember just how long), we went to White River on horseback. We also often helped get a few provisions out to lady homesteaders who couldn't get into town.

As soon as possible we got lumber from the Kositzky Lumber Company in White River and started a house. As Mr. Brown was pretty handy with a hammer and saw, we built a 14 x 20 house ourselves. Everyone said that that was a lot bigger than we needed as most of the shacks were 8 x 12 and some smaller than that. But my reason for coming out here was to get a home and I wanted one big enough for my family. As soon as the house was enclosed, I went back to Nebraska to my wife and family.

I took the wagon canvas back with me and fixed up another wagon and we started back about the last of April. There was nothing eventful on the trip except in the Nebraska Sandhills. We ran out of water, traveled one whole day without seeing one house or any sign of life. The horses were tired and thirsty and so were we and the children. When it go dark, we had to make camp for the night. I had always turned the horses loose to graze at night and they had never left the wagon very far. But the next morning, this time, they were no place in sight. Things looked pretty serious. No horses, no water, and not a sign of any habitation anywhere. There we were — stranded without transportation in the open country! There was a high post on the top of the hill just ahead of us. I went up there and what did I see over the hill but our missing horses, a windmill, a big pond of water, and a barn, but no house. It must have been a watering place for some ranch. And we were truly thankful to find our horses and some water. That was about half way between Brewster and Ainsworth, Nebr.

The rest of the journey was uneventful until we got to the creek that was between our place and Christian Anderson's on the west. When we tried to cross the creek we got stuck in the mud so we left the wagon and walked to the house. Mr. Brown and I got another team and got the wagon home. It had taken us nine days to make the trip. It was a good thing that we did get that wagon out of the mud right away as it really poured rain that night and the creek was bank full. We had stopped at Wood, S. D., where we got a walking breaking-plow, a sack of flour, and a bucket of syrup. I had a dollar and a half left to live and keep a family on. We had brought a dozen hens with us and a sack of feed, so we had plenty of eggs.

It was at Wood where my wife saw her first Indians. She put the boys under the bed covers and hid so they wouldn't see her. Of course they wouldn't bother her, but she didn't know that then.

From then on, it was do any kind of respectable work and everything we could to make a living. As I had horses, I worked for those who did not have any. I broke sod for the neighbors, hauled water by the barrel for them or took groceries and supplies out for some of the lady homesteaders. I hauled freight from Murdo, Winner, and Crookston. In the last part of June, I went down to Hanson County, S. D., where I had two uncles who owned three threshing machines and worked for them until Thanksgiving. My wife and little boys held down the homestead alone. It was a good thing she knew how to handle horses and do most any kind of farm work. At odd times when I was home, I had gotten three or four acres of sod broke for ourselves.

* * *

Mrs. Ozanne takes over and tells her story . . .

I planted some potatoes, sweet corn and a garden. Our house was down by the creek but the farm land was up on what was known then as "The Bordeaux Flats." There were lots of rattlesnakes around and no one ever thought of walking any place without a snake stick. Nearly every time I went up to the garden, I would kill a rattlesnake. As near as I remember, I killed 80 or 90 that first summer.

One day I heard a lot of noise and went out to see what it was. I saw a big dog after a coyote. It ran under a hay rack that was setting on the ground. The dog couldn't get under the hay rack. Just about that time a man came over the hill on horseback. It was Harry Stone. He got a pole and prodded the coyote out and it started up the path toward the house. Roscoe, two years old, was standing about half way to the house and I told him to run back to the house. He started to but fell down. The coyote and dog were coming. How he did yell and try to get up and run, but the dog got in front of the coyote so it turned and ran on top of the dugout barn. The dog was too heavy and almost fell through the hay roof a couple times. By this time he was so hot and tired he refused to fight the coyote any more. I told Mr. Stone I had a .32 revolver in the house. I got it and he shot the coyote.

Another time I saw a coyote catch one of my chickens. I grabbed a ten-gauge shotgun. Our dog was after the coyote; it dropped the chicken and the dog chased him over the hill. Then the coyote turned and chased the dog back down the hill. When the coyote was about one rod from me, I pulled the trigger. The gun kicked me almost over, and the coyote ran back over the hill. I didn't know whether or not I hit him but a neighbor found him a day or two later just over the top of the hill, dead.

The next summer, in 1914, Mr. Ozanne got work at the Rosebud Agency where the Government was building a hospital, so the boys and I were alone again, but he could come home more often so it was not so bad.

School was a big problem, but as I held a Nebraska teacher's certificate, they allowed me to teach the oldest boy at home up to the fourth grade. Then a school was started about three-fourths of a mile northeast of us on the flat. Brant Kent was the first teacher.

Water was another problem for the homesteaders. We had plenty of water on our place, but nothing would soften it. There were no detergents then. So we had to haul all our washing water from the river (Little White River).

We didn't prove up on our place until the five years were up. Soon after that, the Additional Homestead

Law was passed. We found another place seven miles south of White River — Lots 1 and 2, Section 5, and Lots 1, 2, 3, 4, Section 5, T 40-29. The Little White River ran across one corner of it so we filed on that. We sold the first place and moved in 1919 and started again. We had some cows then so it wasn't like the first time.

Our family had increased to three boys and one baby girl.

During the winter of 1918 and 1919, just after World War I, the influenza was so bad. There were many deaths from it. Our baby girl had it very badly and never fully recovered. After two years of suffering, she passed away at the age of two and a half years in September 1921.

In May 1921, our youngest son, Roy was born.

In 1920, a school house was built one mile south of us and Mrs. "Captain" Grey was the first teacher. Up to this time our boys had to go to school just any place where they could get a place to stay. One year they went to the Pine Creek School and boarded with Mr. and Mrs. Keller. The next year they went to the Fridy School, boarding with Mr. and Mrs. Al Barton. One year Roscoe went from home on horseback to the Neville School, five miles east, so we appreciated having the school started so close.

Some White River church history as I remember it:

The first white church built in Mellette County was the Happy Hollow Community Church close to Mr. Gerig's homestead on the White River-Wood road. This church was later moved to Wood, S. D., and it is still there. I think the first church in White River was the Congregational Church and Rev. Van Valkenburgh was the pastor. It was later sold to the Nazarenes. The Methodist Church was the next one built and Rev. Richards was the first pastor. The Catholic was next. Father Waltz was the first priest. Next was the Lutheran Church and Rev. Lange was the first pastor. The Seventh Day Adventist Church was built next with Elder J. A. Estey as first pastor. The last was the Lakota Mission with Rev. John Kerns as first pastor.

Mr. and Mrs. Seth Ozanne, 1960

We have lived in Mellette County for 48 years and have seen it develop from a wilderness with only roving Indians in it, to a thriving farming and ranching country with the best of roads, churches and schools. While we have been through the ups and downs of pioneer life, we love this country and the many good people who have helped to make it what it is now.

'(Mr. Ozanne passed away after this was written, on June 15, 1961, and was laid to rest at White River, June 19, 1961. W. R.)

* * *

### OBITUARY

Seth Nelson Ozanne was born to Abram and Elizabeth Ozanne at Elwood, Nebr., on August 19, 1884, and passed away at the Sandhills General Hospital, Valentine, Nebr., on June 15, 1961, at the age of 76 years, 9 months and 26 days.

He spent his early years on his father's farm. He was united in marriage to Clarissa Mabel Hanlin on May 6, 1906, and to this union were born four sons and one daughter. His daughter, Fern Meredith, preceded him in death in 1921 at the age of two years and seven months.

His parents, two brothers and two sisters also preceded him in death.

In 1912, Seth homesteaded three miles northeast of White River and lived there until 1919 when he sold that homestead and took an additional homestead southwest of White River. He and his family lived there until the fall of 1957 when he moved to White River.

He was baptized into the Seventh Day Adventist Church of White River on May 30, 1936, by Elder Calvin Smith. He remained an active and faithful member of that church throughout the remainder of his life.

He leaves to mourn his passing, his wife, Mabel, of White River; four sons, Clyde, Watford City, N. D.; Roscoe, Twin Falls, Idaho; Glenn, Yakima, Wash.; and Roy of White River; also 15 grandchildren and 1 great grandchild; 1 brother, Erving Ozanne of Elwood, Nebr., and a number of other relatives and a host of friends.

# The First Settlers in Happy Hollow

**By Mr. and Mrs. Pete Petersen**

Alfred Wolford was the first settler in the Happy Hollow community, arriving about the first of April, 1912. He was originally from West Virginia.

The second settlers were the Arthur Turner family, composed of Mr. and Mrs. Turner, Winifred and Garnet, from Wessington Springs.

Third to arrive was Peter A. Petersen, who arrived around the 15th of May.

Two interesting stories center around these first settlers.

Petersen had arrived with a load of lumber preparatory to building his barn. Having no place to sleep, he started over to ask for a night's lodging at Wolfords. He met Mr. Wolford going east to see another man. Wolford told Petersen to go right on over and make himself at home. However, he forgot to give Pete the keys. It started to rain and without the keys, and not wanting to sleep out in the rain through the night, Pete forced his way into the home.

In the meantime, Al failed to return. On the way back from visiting the other settler, he had got lost and ended up in the Badlands to the north, in the middle of the night, with the rain pouring down. He did not return to his home until the next morning after Pete had had his breakfast.

It seems that the settlers were soon to discover that Mrs. Turner was a very hospitable cook and the Turner home became the gathering center of the community, it being mostly bachelors.

They had some cows and the neighbors got their milk from there. Mrs. Turner became the baker of the community. Among some of the personalities, there were John Glatfelter, Gus Kylen, and Al Moorhouse.

One Sunday when the "gang" was at the Turner home, Art had to get a barrel of water. Afterwards he let the horses graze while the men sat in the shade of the tent. The day was hot and no attention was paid to the horses. When Art finally got around to rounding up the horses to take harnesses off them, they couldn't be found.

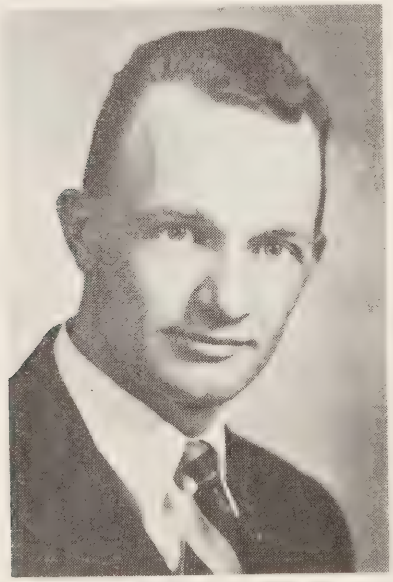
The search started immediately. Pete took his team of mules and wagon; they started hunting and found track of them near the Cody Post Office. They lost track of them again and the next clue was that someone had heard them cross the Westover bridge at night.

After hunting for them for three days, they were found about two miles northwest of Murdo. Murdo was the place where the team had been unloaded and they wanted to get back there.

The fall of 1912, many more settlers arrived. Some of them were Frank Jarboe, Charles Kerlin, Bis Nollsch, and Mrs. A. L. Groom and her mother, Mrs. Anderson.

In the spring of 1913, many more arrived . . . Homer Wilson, Noah Gerig, Scott Merrill, Palmer Brothers, and Tom Gallagher.

* * *



**Edwin Petersen, Oakland, Minn., does a weekly column, "One Farmer's View," for the Albert Lea Tribune. He and his wife, Vera, have 11 children ranging in ages from 1 to 21: Lowell, Karen, Jared, Ann, Randy, Dana, Zina, Adell, Mark, Brent, and Linnea.**

**Mr. and Mrs. David Vincent and Martha, homesteaders near Petersens.**

## SNOWSTORM

The spring of 1913 saw a very severe snowstorm — perhaps the worst to ever hit the community. People dared not leave their homes as visibility was nearly zero.

Petersen found some of his cattle, that he could not keep in the barn, in a snow drift. They were covered completely, with a hole through the snow to show where they were. It took a team to pull them out of the drift. The bull was found with one horn sticking out of the drift. This snowstorm was on March 12th and 13th.

* * *

## HAPPY HOLLOW CHURCH

One of the first desires of the settlers was to have a church. Sunday School was started in the late spring of 1913 at the home of Mrs. Groom.

Rev. Van Valkenburgh had homesteaded southwest of White River and was the first pastor. Margaret Petersen was the first child baptized.

After Mrs. Groom, Sunday School was held at the home of the Palmers' and later at Sjoholms'.

The need of a permanent church was felt and in the spring of 1915 it was decided to build a church.

About the first of August, building commenced. The first job was to haul the lumber from Valentine, Nebr. Glatfelter was the carpenter and supervised the building. Jim Mitchell, Tom Gallagher, Eligah Graham, Bis Nollsch and Pete Petersen were the ones who hauled the lumber, with others helping with the construction.

One eventful trip was when Petersen, Mitchell, Graham and Gallagher went for lumber. Each had his four-horse team. When they arrived at Valentine they discovered that there was a big demand for horses to go to war. As a consequence most of the men traded their horses for "green" stock.

They all started home at the same time. The first night out the new horses could not be turned loose to graze so they were tied to the wagons with the harnesses on. The second day they ran into soft prairie. Loads had to be unloaded and reloaded and they would go around to by-pass the bogs as best they could. The second night was the eventful one. Some of the horses got loose and found their way back home. Mitchell and Gallagher had to double up and leave one load. Their horses had arrived home the next morning. Petersen had bought some unbroke mules and had an interesting time getting home with them, however, they caused no great trouble. Mitchell and Gallagher returned later for the load they had left.

The co-operation which was displayed at the building of the church was typical of the community. There was a very friendly spirit about all activities.

The church was completed in the fall of 1915.

Some of the pastors to serve the Happy Hollow Church were Rev. Van Valkenburgh, Rev. Salter and Rev. Robinson.

# Homesteader Still Appreciates Mellette County

**By Adolf and Bessie Petr**

I will write a little of my life story for you. I, Adolf Petr was 70 years old June 19, 1961. Once I lived in Czechoslovakia. I was with my parents, brothers and sisters. We were a big happy family.

I was happy, too, no worries. Then I got a letter from my brother, Frank Petr, who had already gone to the United States and was in Garber, Okla. He said if I would like to come to the United States, too, that there was plenty of work and land for everybody.

So one day in June 1910 I started for the United States. I came first to Oklahoma to where my brother, Frank, was. Frank had come from Europe earlier to the home of our Uncle Joe Zeleny, so I came there and got a job also. No one who hasn't gone through it knows how hard it is when you come to a strange country. You can't talk the language and the work is done differently; even the climate is different. So, I had all that to learn.

My first job was helping thresh. It was very hot weather. At that time they were still threshing with steam engines. Every thing was different from our ways back home. I was very lonesome. If I would have had the money to pay my way back I would have left the next day to go home to my parents. Later when I talked to other foreigners they all said they felt the same about those first few days.

I didn't have money to leave on, so I had to stay. In time I got used to it all. I was paid fifteen dollars a month in summer, and ten dollars a month during the winter. I worked for my uncle and he taught me how to work and save. So I had a lot to thank him for.

Much later in the fall I went to Nebraska to pick corn. This work was also new to me. I was paid two cents a bushel. After the corn was picked I went back to Oklahoma. The next spring I went to Wagner, S. D. I always worked for farmers, which later in my life helped me when I started to farm for myself.

In the spring of 1912 my brother, Frank, went to Mellette County and homesteaded. Then he got my two brothers, also, to come homestead. Then Frank wanted me to come. So I did. It seemed like we always followed Frank. Each of us four brothers got a quarter of land (160 acres).

Now I will tell you of my first trip to Mellette County. In February 1913, I started for Murdo, coming by train. It was a nice day when we started, but when we got to Chamberlain it had started to snow and the wind was blowing. The farther west we went the worse it got. When I came to Murdo I stayed there all night. Early the next morning I went to the Post Office to see if the mailman was going to White River. It was still storming so he said he wasn't going. Others warned me not to start out. But I was young and did not think anything of it, so I started out on foot, packing my suitcase.

They told me the first farm I would come to would be the England Ranch, a two room house. When I got there, they again told me to stay with them or go back to Murdo, as it was still snowing. But I started out again to Westover where there was a store and Post Office. When I got there they told me the same thing—not to try to go on to White River as it was still a long ways. Also that there were a lot of I. D. cattle along the river and one had to watch out for them because they would take after a person on foot. The next place that I would come to would be a school house called the Bordeaux Day School.

Before I got half way to that school house I was getting awfully tired and also it was getting late in the day. It was nearly evening when I finally saw the school house. How glad I was to see it. I had walked for miles and miles, no houses, no fences, roads were just Indian trails. When I got there I couldn't stay as most of the children had to stay overnight because it was so stormy. So they told me to go two miles farther where there were two Indian families living. They also warned me to be careful as I had to cross the Little White River. They had holes cut in the ice so the cattle could drink. A little ice had frozen over the water holes and then the snow had covered them. I did break through in one place but finally got to those Indian homes. They let me stay until morning and were very kind to me.

Then the next morning I started out again for White River about seven miles away. I got there about noon. Where the Ranchland Drug Store is now, there was a store and Post Office in 1912 run by Mr. Brown. When they saw me they acted like they were looking at a ghost, as they didn't think anybody could travel in that kind of weather.

My brother, Joe Petr, was there. He, too, could hardly believe his eyes. He saw how tired I was so we went to the Clem Tomsik Hotel to get our dinner. I never will forget how good that soup tasted after that long walk. Brother Joe had come in on horseback. So then we borrowed a one horse buggy and harness from the blacksmith, Georgeff.

We started for Frank's homestead. I was still chilled. My feet were stiff so I had to get out and walk behind the buggy so they wouldn't freeze. It took me two weeks to heal my feet. But to this day I don't see how I stood it.

Soon I filed on my homestead, SW 22 40-30. All the good level land was already taken so I didn't get a very good quarter. Only about 40 acres could be plowed. But there was a creek with timber and a spring so I had fire-wood and water. This all helped. Next I built my shack, 10 x 10. I plowed 30 acres. I had seven months to stay home and work to improve my land, and five months to work out as I had no money.

Those first winters were so cold and there was so much snow. What I ate most of the time was coffee, tea and baking powder biscuits. My meat was grouse and cottontails. I must mention that the people really were good. No one had very much but would share with others what little they had when one was hungry. In those days a friendly cup of coffee and some corn bread tasted good. That was another thing that I had to learn, cooking! And I had to learn to bake biscuits as it was too far to walk to town, 14 miles away, to buy bread.

I bought my first two cows in 1915—paid a big price for them. One had a calf, then she died but, I saved the calf. They weren't paid for yet so that part hurt. However, I was honest with the banker, tried to pay my bills on time; that kept my credit good. That all helped me and that is how I got my start. Soon we were raising better crops and everyone raised more cattle.

I will tell you about a trip I took in 1916. We were getting ready to harvest our first crop of oats, but we had no threshing machine. Eric Kasat bought a horsepower threshing machine about 40 miles northeast of Winner. The first big job was to get it home. My brother, Frank, Kasat and I took eight horses and drove down there. Such roads, just trails! That year it rained a lot so the roads were poor also our horses were not too good, so it took us eight days to get that machine home. It was heavy and the roads were bad. We had taken only biscuits and tea along to eat and we slept by hay stacks. So we were tired but glad to get home.

The thresher was old so it took more time to repair it. At last we were ready to start threshing. All the neighbors came with their horses. You had to have 16 horses on it. The teams went round and round like a merry-go-round. It was interesting to see the different kinds of horses and harnesses together when we got them hitched up. When we started we had some excitement. Some horses pulled, others backed up and the harnesses were tangled and some of the tugs were broken. The horses weren't trained to work on a thing like that. Finally we got things repaired and started again. This time it went better. One man had to feed the bundles, one cut twine with a knife and another had to keep the straw away from the blower. We will never forget the first threshing machine and all the hard work.

Adolf and first team, 1918

Next, I decided to build me a better house. I hauled my lumber from Valentine, Nebr., about 59 miles. Our nearest railroad towns were Valentine, Winner and Murdo. One day late in October my brother Frank and I started home from Valentine with two wagon loads of lumber and cement. Our horses weren't too good and we had to ford Little White River as there was no bridge at that time. When we were crossing we got stuck in the quick sand. We had to carry the cement to the river bank. Then we had the job of getting the wagon out of the place where it was bogged down in the quick sand. Next we had to load our wagons again. By that time both we and the horses were hungry. That was no fun!

Later on, all the farmers around there got together with their teams and built a bridge across the river. There were lots of rocks and big logs hauled in. We got some planks for the floor from Todd County. A bridge is still in the same place but has been rebuilt since.

Petr Home, 1917

My brother-in-law, Henry Oyler, helped me build my house as he was a carpenter. I also worked with him when he built many houses in Mellette and Todd Counties. He has since passed away leaving five sons who were also carpenters. Henry was always good to me, helping and advising me.

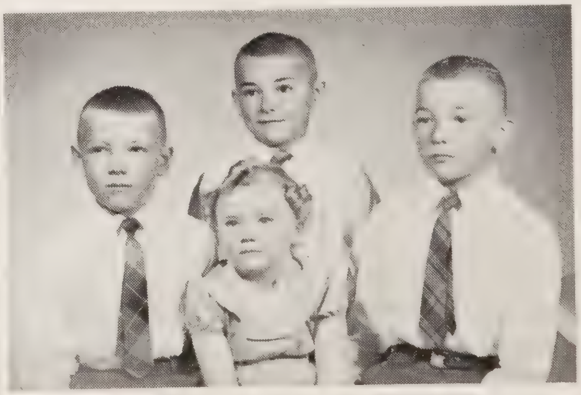
Slowly things were getting better. In 1923 I decided to quit batching and married Miss Bessie Fott of Hamill, S. D. In 1928 our daughter, Bessie Anna, was born. So we were both happy, but as the saying goes; things can't go good forever, for then came the Dirty Thirties—poor crops, grasshoppers, prices went down.

The worst year of all was 1934. No rain, no grass, our prairie was bare. We thought our native grass was gone for good. We had to sell our cattle down to about 49 head. But a miracle happened in the spring of 1935. We got a lot of wet snow and rain and our grass really grew again. The drouth was broken in our area and we started again. We will never forget 1934, so dry and many dust storms. We hope we never live to see another year like it or our children either.

The people who stuck it out then, bought more cheap land. Cattle prices went up and still are good. Western South Dakota is a wonderful cattle country.

In 1947 our daughter married Harold Krogman, a cowboy and rancher. He likes cattle, horses and sheep and we were very happy to have him and our daughter take over our ranch.

They have worked hard and made a lot of improvements on the place. They have three boys and our son-in-law is teaching them the same trade, cattle,



**Petrs' grandchildren: Harold, Edward, Benny and Kristi Krogman.**

Petr Home, 1961

horses and ranching. Also they have a daughter, Kristi Kaye, who will be a help to her mother. We bought, for ourselves, a small place six miles east of Mission and still run a few head of cattle to pass the time.

Talking about the homesteading days has reminded me of the way the women cooked in those days. We broke the sod and in the furrows planted potatoes. We also planted beans, peas and melons in the sod. When they got enough moisture they grew nicely. We raised a few chickens, with hens, so we would have meat and eggs. Later we raised a few hogs. We butchered at home so we had our own lard. We never bought lard, if we ran out we used home-made butter. Everything was grown or made at home. Out of the waste lard we made soap. We home-cured our own hams and bacons. The rest you would fry down. To do this you would roast your pork in the oven, then put it in a stone jar. Pour hot lard over this. Then we would take out a piece for our meal as we needed it. You had to be sure the rest was covered with lard. It was real good and kept well. We also canned a lot of pork, beef and chicken. It was a lot of work but we always had plenty of canned meat on hand.

Much later the electricity came with refrigerators and deep freezers. They are a great help and very nice but cost money. Even if we had had them in homesteading days very few could have afforded them.

A big item those first years was our wild fruit. We could hardly wait for our first wild chokecherries to make jelly. Then there were the good wild plums that made jelly and plum butter. The wild grapes made such good jelly. We always tried to make enough to last a year or so. We still make plenty as this wild fruit makes the very best jelly and jam. Times have changed, now we can go to the store and buy all kinds of fruit, vegetables and meat in cans.

We often say how lucky I am that I came to the United States and good old Mellette County in South Dakota. I could never have accomplished in Europe what I have here.

# The Josef Petr Story

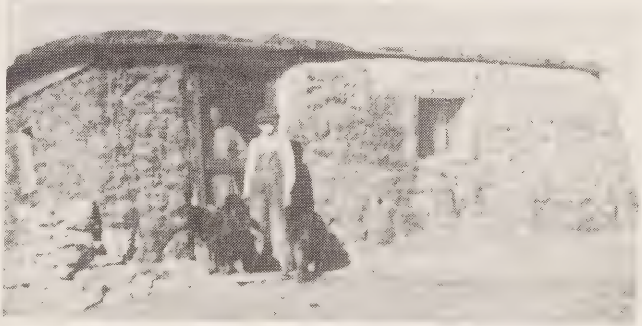
By Rose Berry

Josef Petr came to the United States from Czechoslovakia in 1912, coming to Dante, S. D. He worked as a farm laborer until 1913 around Dante and Wagner, S. D. Then he filed on a homestead which was located about 16 miles southwest of White River, in Mellette County.

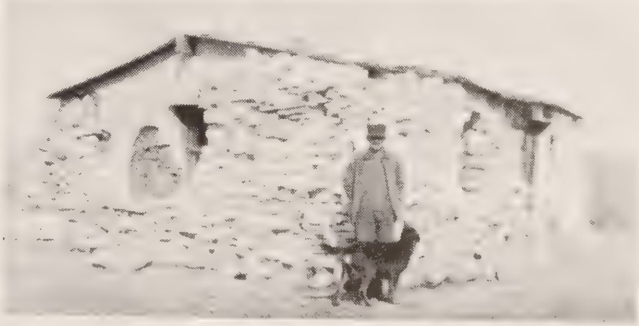
Mr. and Mrs. Josef Petr
Picture taken 1917

He spent part of his time as required, on the homestead and in order to earn money to live on he worked at the boarding school near Mission, S. D. He helped haul sand and rock for some new buildings that were being constructed there at that time. He also worked on ranches in Todd and Tripp Counties.

His first home in Mellette County was a sod house,



This sod house was built by Josef Petr in 1913 on his homestead. Standing in the doorway are Rose and Joe Topinka. The family lived in this house until 1922, when a new house was built.



Rudolf Petr built this sod house on his homestead located about 18 miles southwest of White River in 1913. At the present time, Mr. Petr is living in the town of White River. Mrs. Petr passed away Oct. 6, 1961.

also his first barn was built of part sod and part lumber. He and his family lived in this house until 1922, when a new house was built. The barn, with some lumber that had been stored in it, was destroyed by a prairie fire in 1914. Mr. Petr was away from home working in Todd County when that happened.

In 1917, he married Mrs. Josefa Topinka of New Prague, Minn. She was a widow with two children, a daughter Rose, and a son Joe. Mr. and Mrs. Petr lived on the homestead until 1947. Due to his wife's poor health they moved into the town of White River. Mrs. Petr passed away in March 1956.

Mr. and Mrs. Petr always had a lot of beautiful flowers around their place. His step-daughter, writer of this story, also lives in White River now, she is the widow of the late G. Cleve Berry.

# Moving Westward in a Covered Wagon

By Sandra Jarl

My grandfather, Joseph Petranek, came to America from Czechoslovakia, in 1905 and settled with his parents near Tabor, S. D. My grandmother, Anna Homolka, was born March 19, 1887, in Dakota Territory—in what is now Bon Homme County, S. D. Her parents, too, came from Czechoslovakia.

**Early sod house and stone barn in Dakota Territory. This is Grandma Petranek's home (sod house) where she grew up. Taken about 1895 in Charles Mix County. The stone barn is still in use today. They moved from Bon Homme County to Charles Mix County when she was eight years old.**

They were married in 1909 and lived on a farm near Wagner, S. D. Grandma's uncle, Joseph Bohac, worked for them at this time.

In 1911 when Mellette County was opened for homesteading, Grandpa and Uncle Joe went to Chamberlain to register. There, their names along with the rest, were placed in containers to be drawn on October 24th. In order to satisfy all who wanted to homestead it had been decided to use a lottery system ond draw names. Uncle had his name drawn but Grandpa was not as fortunate. In April 1912 they came to Mellette County to file on Uncle Joe's land. He said it looked too wild to him here and he did not want to homestead out here alone. So my grandparents agreed to come out with him and they agreed that after he proved up on his claim they would buy the land from him and he could return to Wagner to live.

In September 1912 the men prepared to start on their journey to White River. Grandpa had three horses on a hayrack which was loaded with mower, hay rake and tools. While Uncle Joe had a two horse team and covered wagon, with a double box, and his load included household goods.

The going was rather difficult and slow. The horses were not used to the hilly country. They would have to use both teams to pull one of the wagons up the hills. After a week's journey, they arrived at White River and proceeded on 12 miles northwest to their claim.

First they dug a well then started to build a house. It had two bedrooms and a small kitchen. They hauled the lumber, which cost one hundred dollars, from White River. The barn cost fifty dollars; it was a frame building and along one side they built a lean-to shed with a hay roof. They made a small pasture for their cattle which they intended to bring later on.

During this period, Grandma was preparing food to bring along with them for the winter. They butchered a hog and fried down the meat, putting it in a cream can and filling it with lard. This kept very well and tasted like fresh fried meat.

After six weeks, Grandpa went back to Wagner and Uncle Joe stayed in Mellette County to put up hay for the cattle. Grandpa and Grandma loaded their belongings into the train at Delmont, S. D. This included some household goods, five head of cattle, two small pigs, a crate of chickens and three ducks. After a day's journey they arrived at Okaton, S. D. Uncle Joe was there waiting for them. He drove up the team and hay rack leading the other team and wagon as well as his saddle horse. Grandpa loaded the hayrack with some household goods, tools, chickens, pigs and ducks. The wagon, which Grandma drove, was loaded with canned goods, bedding, clothing and the cook stove. When all was ready, Grandpa took the lead down the rough trail toward the homestead. Grandma had two small children with her. Clara, then two years old, sat on the seat beside her and Ben, eleven months, was on her lap. Behind them, came Uncle Joe, driving the cattle.

The road down to the Big White River was rough and steep. Grandma was afraid that she and the children would fall off the seat into the river. When they were half way across the river, her team stopped to drink. When she tried to start up they could not move the wagon because is was stuck in the quicksand. Grandpa was already across, so he came back, hitched his team to her's and helped her wagon across.

Again they were on their way. But the hills were very steep and the trail narrow. Soon, the weary horses could not pull the hayrack up the canyon any farther. It started to go back down the hill until it hit a bank of dirt. The rack upset. What a noise—chickens cackling, pigs squealing and ducks quacking. They set the rack back up, and loaded everything on again.

It was almost evening by now, so they decided to leave the rack there until morning.

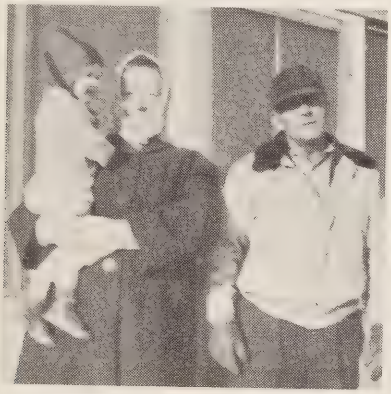
Grandpa sent Uncle Joe to ask Adam Smith, a rancher living nearby, if he could stay there that night with the cattle. Mr. Smith said it would be alright. With Grandma's team and wagon, they started on again. They arrived at their new home at four o'clock in the morning. They unloaded the wagon and Grandpa went to get a neighbor, Ernest Larson, to go with him after the other load.

The first time Grandma looked out of her kitchen window, she saw a coyote, a short distance from the house.

There were very few fences. You could see grazing cattle which belonged to ranchers several miles away. Then came the blizzard of March 13, 1913. It lasted three days and no one could go outside for fear of getting lost. Cattle drifted with the storm and were buried under the drifts. Draws were drifted level with snow. In the spring, when the snow melted, you could see cattle dead in the valleys that had died in the blizzard. After the storm there was no roof left on Grandpa's cowshed because when the snow got deep the cows stood on the snow and ate the hay roof off.

Some of their closest neighbors were Joseph Blazeks, E. H. McLain, Elizabeth Hledik, Oscar Frykland, John Romm, Frank and Pete Bechtolds, Deckers and Mary Homolka. The Indian neighbors were very friendly and would visit us often; some living close by were Arrow Spike, Red Fish, Side Hill and Running Bird.

Chief Red Fish, fought in the "Battle of Wounded Knee" and was very proud to show us the scar on his neck where he had been wounded. None of them, could speak much English, so Grandpa learned to talk Indian and they understood each other very well.



**Grandma and Grandpa Petranek and Grandson Alvin, in 1946.**

During that first fall, Grandpa heard of some land a half mile west that had not been claimed. He was informed that he could file on it and prove up on it. It was appraised at five dollars an acre. So he dug a well and a cellar, also built a sod chicken house on this land. In the spring they built a little shack for Uncle Joe to live in, and then moved their buildings over to their claim.

In the spring, Grandpa plowed 15 acres and Grandma planted it all to corn with a hand planter. It did not rain until July so the corn did not grow until after the rain.

Grandpa went back to Wagner, S. D., that summer to work in the harvest fields. Uncle Joe put up the hay for their cows. That summer, Grandma raised some garden vegetables. She milked the cows and churned the cream into butter. Every week Uncle Joe would take it to town. One week he would buy groceries and the next week he would buy corn. This corn Grandma would grind in the coffee mill for her little chickens.

During the next winter, they decided to dig a well close to the buildings. They fixed up a derrick of three posts and put a pulley on it. They used a rope and bucket to pull up the dirt from the well. Grandpa dug, Grandma pulled up the buckets full of dirt, while Uncle Joe carried and dumped them. The deeper they dug, the harder the shale. After 55 feet of digging they could go no deeper. Not even a crow bar could chisel through it. So they abandoned the well as it had only a trickle of water in it.

After Uncle Joe proved up on his claim he returned to Wagner to make his home.

Homesteaders were always on the lookout for prairie fires. One big fire in the year 1917 came from the west. When it came to the field, west of the house, it divided. One part went on the south side of the house and the other fire was on the north side of the barn. Luckily, the buildings did not burn. While Grandma watched around the buildings, Grandpa backfired around the haystacks and they did not burn up either. The whole prairie was burned in the path of the fire. Another time, a fire started about a half mile south of them. This one jumped the Little White River and burned to O'Neill, Nebr., before it was put out.

Rattlesnakes were everywhere. They would get into the buildings. Once they found one sunning himself in the chicken house window. Another time, when Grandpa was pitching hay on the rack, one slid from the hay and his fork, down his back and onto the ground.

When Grandma's relatives would come to visit, there was not enough room for all of them to sleep in the house, so the men took hay and fixed themselves beds in the log house. This log house was later to be used for a chicken house. In the morning, when the men picked up their bedding, a big rattlesnake was under Grandpa's pillow. When he told the visiting aunt about it, she said "I wouldn't live out here for anything in the world."

The Bechtold school was built in 1917 and the children started to school there. In 1919 they had the flu. Several of the neighbors passed away as the result of the flu epidemic.

Almost every summer, before school started, Petraneks would go to Wagner, S. D., to visit relatives. They had to cross the Missouri River on a ferry boat because there were no bridges. They could see the old Fort Randall Chapel from the road.

Grandpa made a bob sled and many times they drove the team and bob sled to town in the wintertime. He also did his own blacksmith and carpenter work. Their first car was a Buick touring car, with side curtains that could be put on if it was rainy or cold. The lights were carbide with the tank on the running board of the car. These lights had to be lit with a match, and when the wind was blowing it was rather difficult to light them.

Every spring, when the snow melted, the creeks would flood the lowlands. One time when Grandpa went to town, it was a warm morning. When he returned, so much snow had melted, that the water in the creek was too deep to cross. He fired his rifle, which he also carried to shoot coyotes with. Grandma heard it, and also heard him calling for her to bring the saddle horse, Jenny, down so he could cross. Grandma led her to the creek about a half mile away. Then she threw the rope across the water. Grandpa led the horse across, loaded on the groceries and rode her back through the creek safely.

There were no local markets, so livestock had to be hauled to distant markets to be sold or shipped. Once, when Grandpa took a load of hogs to Murdo he got

Grandma Petranek and granddaughters, Sandra Jarl (who wrote story) and Dianna Petranek, 1951.

stuck in the Big White River in the quicksand. He had to unload the hogs in the river, drive them to a farm place, get his wagon out and reload the hogs before going on. He was gone for three days and Grandma was almost frantic for fear something had happened to him.

Grandpa and Grandma were in the ranching and farming business until 1946, when they sold their place to their son-in-law, my father, Oswald Jarl. Then they built themselves a comfortable home on the Little White River west of the town of White River.

In 1952, Grandpa passed away. Grandma lived on the river until 1960 when she moved her house into White River. Grandma Petranek has seven children, all living: Clara, lives near Sequim, Wash.; Martha near Lakeview, Iowa; Edwin at Belle Fourche, S. D.; Lillian at West Chester, Pa.; Emma, my mother, on a ranch west of White River; Joe in White River; and Ben at home with her.

She has 14 grandchildren and 10 great grandchildren. Grandma Petranek has lived in South Dakota all of her 74 years. Forty-eight of these have been spent in Mellette County.

Even though life today is much easier than it was in homesteading days, I'm sure it couldn't be any more interesting. My grandparents represented a hardy breed of people who came here when the land was young. They will be remembered for many years.

Petranek family. These are all the children. Taken in about 1950.

# The E. L. Pigg Story

### By Mrs. Charles Pigg

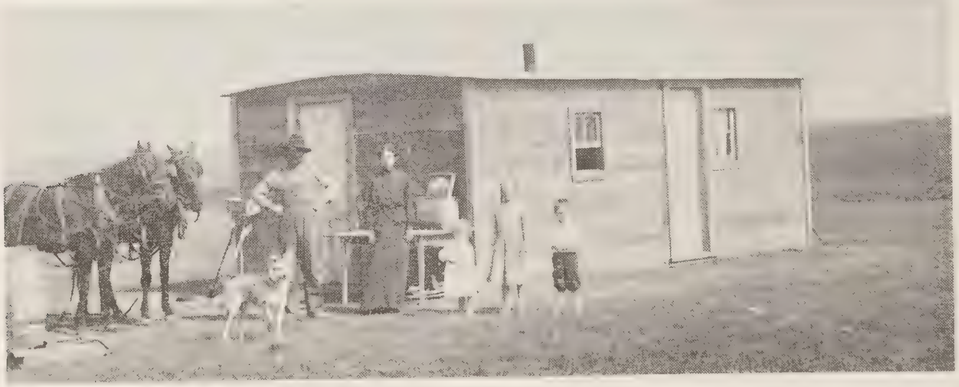
Mr. and Mrs. Edgar L. Pigg and their children, Elizabeth (Mrs. Clarence Lindquist, Hamilton, Mont.), Charles (living near the home place), and Maud (Mrs. Alfred Johnson, Sioux Falls, S. D.), homesteaded in Mellette County 10 miles north of White River. They came from Oak Grove, Mo.

They lived on their claim for a while, then to be close to a school they returned to Missouri. They stayed in Missouri seven years before returning to South Dakota to live. While they were in Missouri, their shack was used for a school house.

The Piggs had the first radio in the neighborhood so they had a lot of company to listen to it. Also Charles' cousin, Elwell Pigg, set up a broadcasting station which he called "Soap Weed Butte." This was heard many places. Charles played his violin for many of the dances and entertainments.

The Pigg family attended the Mellette County homesteaders picnic on June 18, 1913, as did many of the early settlers.

E. L. Pigg passed away March 17, 1954, and Mrs. E. L. Pigg died September 2, 1960.



The Ed. L. Pigg family on their homestead, 10 miles northeast of White River.

# Reuben Quick Bear

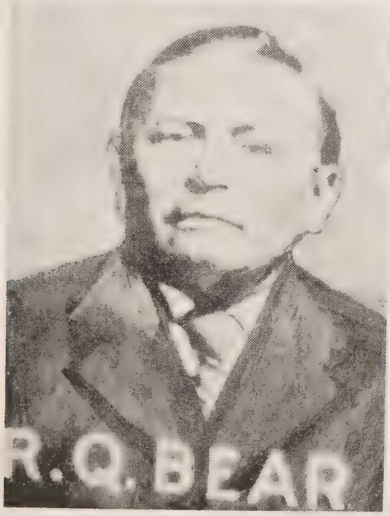
**By Blanche Kaufman**

Reuben Quick Bear was born at Fort Laramie, Wyo., in 1866. He came to what is now Mellette County in the early 1880's when the Rosebud Reservation was established.

He attended Carlisle School in Pennsylvania for several years so was well educated and very intelligent. He was one of the first County Commissioners of Mellette County, served as a postmaster at Norris, S. D., and at one time owned the Norris store. He was also a member of a delegation of Indians and White men who went to Washington, D. C., when necessary about Tribal business. Reuben was also one of the first four Indians in the Rosebud Reservation to have short hair — in the days when Indians all wore long hair.

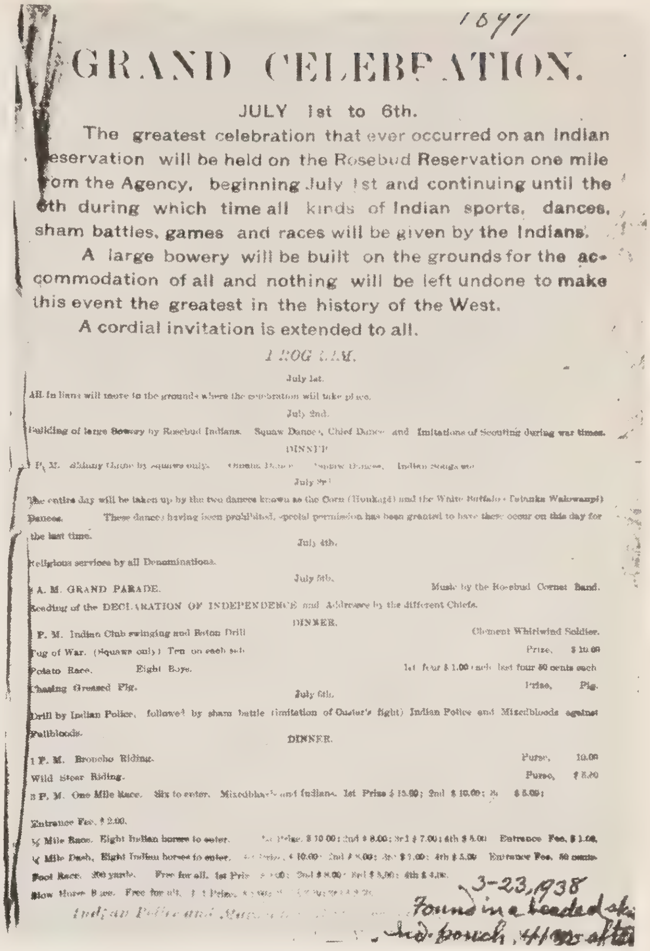
**Reuben Quick Bear family. Picture is weather damaged.**

Will Hollenbeck and Reuben Quick Bear went to Washington, D. C., and were successful in getting the new townsite of White River designated as the filing headquarters for the homesteaders in April 1912. This victory for White River played a key part in winning the election for White River, as County seat location.



**Reuben Quick Bear (1911) who played an important part in early Mellette County history. One of the first county commissioners. Also manager of First Celebration at Rosebud, July 4, 1897.**

(Blanche Kaufman picture)



1897

GRAND CELEBRATION.

JULY 1st to 6th.

The greatest celebration that ever occurred on an Indian Reservation will be held on the Rosebud Reservation one mile from the Agency, beginning July 1st and continuing until the 6th during which time all kinds of Indian sports, dances, sham battles, games and races will be given by the Indians.

A large bowery will be built on the grounds for the accommodation of all and nothing will be left undone to make this event the greatest in the history of the West.

A cordial invitation is extended to all.

PROGRAM.

July 1st.

All Indians will move to the grounds where the celebration will take place.

July 2nd.

Building of large Bowery by Rosebud Indians. Squaw Dances, Chief Dance and Imitations of Scouting during war times.

DINNER

P. M. Shinny Game by squaws only. Omaha Dance Squaw Dances, Indian Songs etc

July 3rd

The entire day will be taken up by the two dances known as the Corn (Hunkapi) and the White Buffalo (Tatanka Walowanpi) Dances. These dances having been prohibited, special permission has been granted to have these occur on this day for the last time.

July 4th.

Religious services by all Denominations.

July 5th.

A. M. GRAND PARADE. Music by the Rosebud Cornet Band.

Reading of the DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE and Addresses by the different Chiefs.

DINNER.

P. M. Indian Club swinging and Baton Drill Clement Whirlwind Soldier.

Tug of War. (Squaws only) Ten on each side Prize, $10.00

Potato Race. Eight Boys. 1st four $1.00 each last four 50 cents each

Chasing Greased Pig. Prize, Pig.

July 6th.

Drill by Indian Police, followed by sham battle (imitation of Custer's fight) Indian Police and Mixedbloods against Fullbloods.

DINNER.

1 P. M. Broncho Riding. Purse, 10.00

Wild Steer Riding. Purse, $5.00

3 P. M. One Mile Race. Six to enter. Mixedbloods and Indians. 1st Prize $15.00; 2nd $10.00; 3rd $5.00;

Entrance Fee, $2.00.

½ Mile Race. Eight Indian horses to enter. 1st Prize, $10.00; 2nd $8.00; 3rd $7.00; 4th $5.00 Entrance Fee, $1.00.

¼ Mile Dash, Eight Indian horses to enter. 1st Prize, $10.00; 2nd $8.00; 3rd $7.00; 4th $5.00 Entrance Fee, 50 cents.

Foot Race. 200 yards. Free for all. 1st Prize [illegible]; 2nd $8.00; 3rd $5.00; 4th $4.00.

Slow Horse Race. Free for all. 1st Prize [illegible]

Indian Police and [illegible]

3-23,1938
Found in a beaded sk
Ind. pouch, 41 yrs aft

**The above is made from a photo of an original poster of the 1897 celebration from the J. H. Bratley collection. Reuben Quick Bear's name appeared dimly at the bottom of the poster. The copy of the poster was found in 1938 — 41 years after the celebration — in an Indian's beaded pouch.**

Copy of Original Owned by J. H. Bratley:

### GRAND CELEBRATION (1897)
### July 1st to 6th

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July 4th

Religious services for all denominations.

July 5th

8 A.M. GRAND PARADE
Music by the Rosebud Cornet Band

Reading of the DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE and Addresses by the different Chiefs.

DINNER

1 P.M. Indian Club swinging and Baton Drill.
Clement Whirlwind Soldier.

Tug of War. (Squaws only.) Ten on each Side.
Prize $10.00

Potato Race. Eight boys. 1st four, $1.00 each.
Last four, 50 cents each.

Chasing greased pig. Prize, Pig.

July 6th

Drill by Indian Police, followed by sham battle (imitation of Custer's fight), Indian Police and Mixed Bloods against Full Bloods.

DINNER

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 P.M. Broncho Riding | Purse $10.00 |
| Wild Steer Riding | Purse $ 5.00 |

3 P.M. One Mile Race. Six to enter. Mixed-bloods and Indians. First Prize, $15.00; 2nd, $10.00; 3rd, $5.00. Entrance Fee - $2.00.

½ Mile Race. Eight Indian Horses to enter. 1st Prize, 10.00; 2nd, $8.00; 3rd, $7.00; 4th, $5.00. Entrance Fee, $1.00.

¼ Mile Dash. Eight Indian Horses to enter. 1st Prize, $10.00; 2nd, $8.00; 3rd, $7.00; 4th, $5.00. Entrance Fee, 50 cents.

Foot Race, 200 yards. Free for all. First Prize, $9.00; 2nd, $8.00; 3rd, $5.00; 4th, $4.00.

Slow Horse Race. Free for all. 1st Prize, $4.00; 2nd, $3.50; 3rd, $2.50.

Indian Police and Marshals will preserve Order.

REUBEN QUICK BEAR, MANAGER

* * *

Realizing the importance of education, he joined some White people in starting a school at Norris, S. D. His older children along with the children of the storekeeper, Boss Farmer and Hanson's children attended this school in a log cabin near the present site of Norris.

Reuben died in 1918 and was buried in the Episcopal Cemetery at Parmelee.

A White friend of Reuben's had a top buggy and a fast horse. Reuben enjoyed riding with him and always remarked "This is just my calibre!"

His wife, Mary, lived on her allotment until about 1950 when she moved to White River. She died in 1953 at the age of 81. She was a very kind person and a good neighbor. One time a little child strayed away from home and came to Mary's door. Mary carried the little girl home in a blanket on her back, Indian fashion. The child enjoyed the ride, but I don't think Mary did, as it was a half mile across the prairies.

**July 4, 1897, the first, large celebration for the Sioux and Whites together on the Rosebud; 6,000 Indians present. Camping circle more than a mile across. (J. H. Bratley picture.)**

# Forty-nine Years In Mellette County

### By L. V. Raffensperger

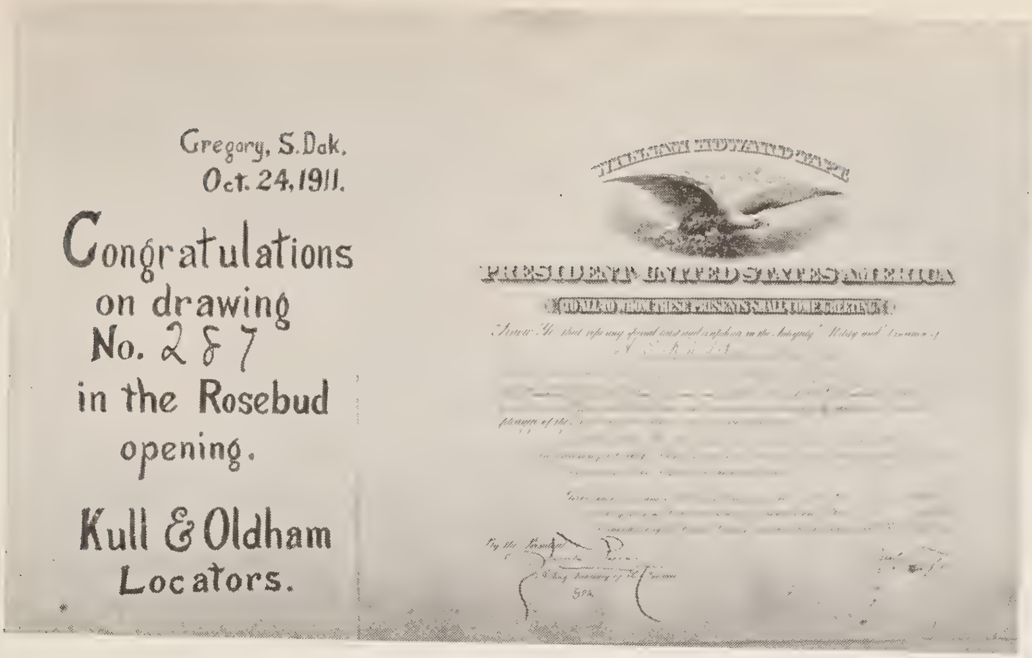
While I was visiting my father and brothers in Pensylvania during the spring of 1912, I received notice to appear in White River, S. D., on April 20th to exercise my homestead rights according to the number which I had drawn in the land lottery held at Gregory, S. D., some six months before.

This opening of land for homesteading included all of the unallotted land in the Rosebud and Pine Ridge Indian Reservations.

I left Pennsylvania on April Fool's day (a very appropriate time to start on an adventure) going to Chicago where I spent a few days before going on to Buda, Ill., which had been my home for two years.

On April 14, 1912, I boarded the train for Winner, S. D. On the train I met a Mr. McKay who was also bound for Winner. Mr. McKay decided to stay in Winner for a while before going to White River and I consented to stay with him. It soon became apparent that he was getting cold feet in regard to the idea of homesteading. After two days he bought a ticket for home and that was the last I heard or saw of him. Also on the train was Lige Graham with his wife and son on their way out to file on a claim in Mellette County. They were residents for many years in "Happy Hollow."

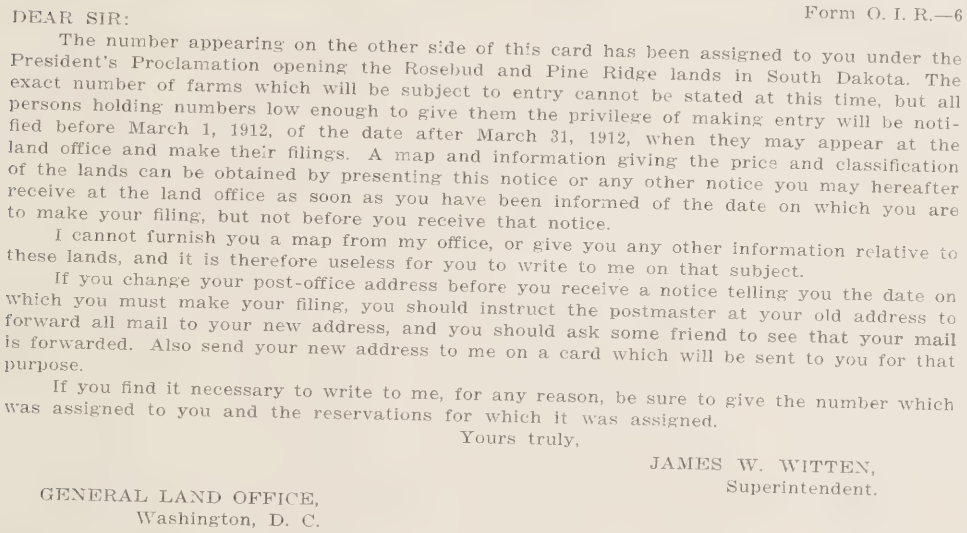
When my number, "287," was called, I filed on SE 17 42-29. I decided not to establish residence at that time and returned to Winner where I worked for a month.



Gregory, S. Dak.
Oct. 24, 1911.

Congratulations
on drawing
No. 287
in the Rosebud
opening.

Kull & Oldham
Locators.



DEAR SIR: Form O. I. R.—6

The number appearing on the other side of this card has been assigned to you under the President's Proclamation opening the Rosebud and Pine Ridge lands in South Dakota. The exact number of farms which will be subject to entry cannot be stated at this time, but all persons holding numbers low enough to give them the privilege of making entry will be notified before March 1, 1912, of the date after March 31, 1912, when they may appear at the land office and make their filings. A map and information giving the price and classification of the lands can be obtained by presenting this notice or any other notice you may hereafter receive at the land office as soon as you have been informed of the date on which you are to make your filing, but not before you receive that notice.

I cannot furnish you a map from my office, or give you any other information relative to these lands, and it is therefore useless for you to write to me on that subject.

If you change your post-office address before you receive a notice telling you the date on which you must make your filing, you should instruct the postmaster at your old address to forward all mail to your new address, and you should ask some friend to see that your mail is forwarded. Also send your new address to me on a card which will be sent to you for that purpose.

If you find it necessary to write to me, for any reason, be sure to give the number which was assigned to you and the reservations for which it was assigned.

Yours truly,

JAMES W. WITTEN,
Superintendent.

GENERAL LAND OFFICE,
Washington, D. C.

**The above card, postmarked Gregory, S. Dak., Oct. 26, 1911, was addressed to Leroy V. Raffensperger, Buda, Ill., and carried this information on the address side: "Your number for Pine Ridge or Rosebud lands is No. 287."**

When I came back to Mellette County I built a car-roof, tar-papered shack 8 x 16. I walked back and forth to White River until it was completed. On the way out I followed the marked trails and on the way back I chose the shortest route.

This short cut took me across the claim of Mr. and Mrs. L. W. Cline, who were living in a tent. Mr. Cline was in the process of digging a well and had struck water. It looked so nice and clear, and as the ladder was still in the well I decided to quench my thirst. As I came back up the ladder, Mrs. Cline called from the tent, "Don't drink any of that water, it will kill you." It was alkali, it didn't kill me; but I never drank from that well again!

Lew Barton, a native of Ainsworth, Nebr., with his wife and two sons had established residence in the Cottonwood community. He broke two acres of sod which I planted to corn. When it was hip high, a bunch of Indian horses destroyed it.

Charley Brown and I joined forces and dug our wells. There was no local work to be had and having no machinery to work with I decided to seek employment elsewhere. When leaving your homestead for any length of time, one had to notify the land office which was located at Chamberlain, S. D. This was to protect you from claim jumpers.

I left the claim the 23rd of July, waded the river and caught the stage on the trail that crossed what is now H. P. Stromer's ranch. I had heard that the crops were good in North Dakota, so I headed that way. Arriving there, I was hardly off the train before I had a job. Wages were $2.50 per day for harvest hands and $3.00 for threshing help. I had work there until I returned to Mellette County in the middle of December.

Before I left for North Dakota, I had made a contract with Mr. Ritter to put up my hay on shares. We were later able to sell this feed to the livery barns in White River.

Raffensperger Home, 1914

The Raffensperger Home in White River, 1961

A number of families had moved into the neighborhood during my absence, and some with children of school age. When they found out that I was qualified to teach, I was drafted for a four month term. The school board furnished the lumber for five double desks, which I built and installed.

School began in January with the following pupils enrolled: Pearl Yale, Clurus Hoffman, Ruth, Eleanor and Gertrude Vorhees, Ossie, Kyle and Leon Hamby and Grace Walker. The only building available was the homestead shack of Peter Busch who had taken a leave of absence from his claim. However, his time was up and he returned before the term was out, so the last month of school was finished in a tent. On the last day of school all the patrons and friends gathered for a picnic. This was the first social gathering in the Ridgeway community, and many more were held in that area in the early years.

On January 12, 1916, at Pierre, S. D., I was united in marriage to Roxy Canney, a school teacher, who, with her brother was homesteading on adjoining claims. The Canneys homesteaded in the Stamford community in 1906. Roxy had taught in that part of Stanley County which is now Jackson County.

After completing our respective terms of school we took permanent residence on my homestead which became our home for 43 years. Our first addition to the ranch was purchased in 1920 and the last additions in 1950 making a total of 14 quarters of land in all.

Our son, Rex, was born March 1, 1918. He graduated from White River high school in 1936 as salutatorian of his class. After attending the School of Mines at Rapid City he worked at civil engineering jobs. In 1946 he assumed a third interest in the ranch, continuing until 1961 when he became absolute manager.

Our first herd of cattle numbered ten head of all kinds and was added to as we were able. After the disasterous drouth, which almost drove us out, we introduced Black Angus cattle. They proved very profitable; for years we were able to furnish feeders to some of the best yards in Iowa and Minnesota. When we dispersed this herd in 1959 we had built up one of the best commercial herds in this county.

In 1959, we built our present home in White River. We moved there and are very comfortable but there is no place in the world that can beat life on a ranch. I would be there yet if I were 10 years younger.

In conclusion, I will relate a few incidents that happened in homesteading days.

That first winter, I purchased four broncos and a 12-inch plow. As you might guess, space will not allow me to tell all that happened while I was teaching those broncos to pull a plow.

In the summer of 1913, William Pewee and I purchased some haying machinery. We put up hay for our neighbors, including Homer Searle, who had shipped in a carload of two-year-old heifers. They were the start of the "Lazy S, Lazy D" ranch.

Mr. and Mrs. L. W. Cline were natives of Ohio. They first lived in a tent, later built a sod house and were comfortably located. They were the oldest couple to homestead for miles around. Mr. Cline was a very good farmer and was noted for his fine crops, excellent watermelons and sweet corn. Like all melon kings he was plagued by nocturnal callers who preyed on the fruits of his labor, so he decided to sleep in the patch. But alas, the next morning he was chagrined to discover that a number of his prize melons had been lifted while he slumbered. He was also known as an ardent fisherman.

Another neighbor, Peter Busch, was noted for his fiery temper. One day, while I was absent, my hogs had broken out and went calling. I started looking for them and soon found tracks leading toward Peter's place. When I got in sight of his place, they were there alright, and he was trying to chase them away. He

Raffensperger Ranch "Then"

Raffensperger Ranch "Now"

came to meet me. I could hear him talking long before we met but his words weren't fit to print. He was a native of Denmark and for a while I wasn't able to understand him. As soon as he had run down a little, I asked him how much damage had been done, stating that I would pay for it. He replied that they had not destroyed anything, except that they were tramping down his grass. This remark must have amused me, because I laughed. He said, "I'm going to get my gun and shoot your brains out." I answered, "O. K., Pete, let's go and get the gun." We both started for his shack. When we got within a few paces of the door, he stopped and said, "You are a ----- fool." I said, "I think there are two of us." He helped me take the hogs home and repair the pen. We were good friends thereafter. A short time later I bought his quarter section and he left the country. The last time I heard of him he was in California.

# Early Dakota History

**By Mrs. Ann Sammons**

These are some of the adventures told to Wm. E. (Ted) Sammons when he was a boy, by his grandfather, James Madison Reed.

James Madison Reed and his brothers, Will and Tom, were militia men and Indian Scouts. They were stationed at Fort Niobrara and at Yankton during the territorial days of our state.

After the Custer Massacre in 1876 and the Battle of Wounded Knee in 1890, the Sioux Indians were rounded up by the soldiers under the command of Captain Zieback. A large number of the Indians were gathered together at Yankton preparatory to taking them to their new homes on the Reservation.

One group was sent to Oklahoma. Ted's uncle, Will Reed, was one of the soldiers who helped take some Indains down there. He told afterwards, that some of the Indians beat the soldiers back to Yankton.

In the detachment that was detailed to take some of the Tribes into what is now the Rosebud country, was Grandfather James Madison Reed. The Indians were moody and unwilling to go to their new home. They started out early in the summer, probably about 1891, with ox teams, mules, horses and enough supplies to last most of the summer. The Indian squaws in particular were very unco-operative. When given rations they would often open the sacks and scatter the food over the ground. When issued china plates at meal time, they clapped them together, breaking them and then throwing the pieces into the fire. Sometimes the soldiers were unable to make them move from one camp to another for several days at a time. The only sure inducement was food. When they got hungry enough, then they could be moved on to the next camp.

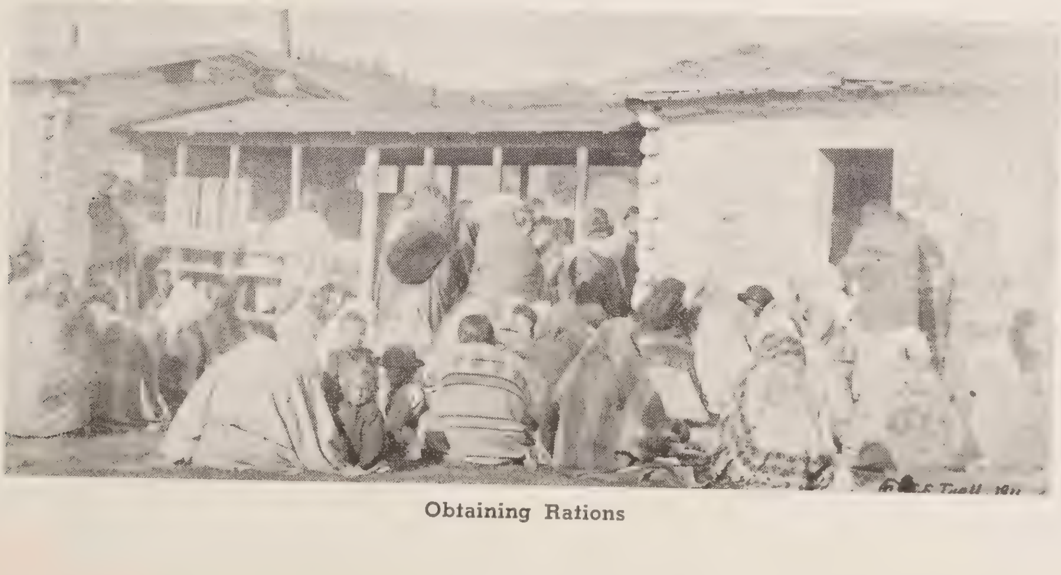
This continued most of the trip. When they finally reached the creek and hills where Rosebud Agency is now situated the Indians refused to budge. The wagons and mules got stuck in the mud when they attempted to cross the creek and the Indians became harder to manage. The soldiers finally gave up in disgust and after a parley between the Indian leaders and the commanding officers, it was decided to leave the Indians at Rosebud. Their original destination was to have been Red Leaf, which is on Black Pipe creek which is several miles south and west of Norris, S. D.

James Madison Reed died in 1914 at the home of a son, south of Colome, S. D. Uncle Tom was lost during a severe blizzard and badly froze both of his feet. Part of one foot had to be removed and he was discharged from the Army.

The names of James, Will and Tom Reed are inscribed, along with the names of the other brave soldiers and scouts of this period, on a bronze plaque, located on a monument which stands in front of the courthouse at Yankton, S. D.

Ted's mother died when he was six years old so he, his brother and two sisters went to live with their grandparents. He remembers his grandmother telling how they raised and sold potatoes to the Indians around Yankton. His grandfather also chopped and corded up wood along the river bank, for the steam-boats that went up and down the Missouri River at that time.

They told a story of a pair of half-broke mules and wagon that someone sold to the Indians. During a run-



Obtaining Rations

away of these mules, an Indian boy was thrown out of a wagon and his leg was broken. That night the Indian war drums beat all night long. The settlers spent a very uneasy night thinking the Indians might be angry because of the boy's broken leg. Perhaps they were only beating on the drums to ward off evil spirits or help their medicine man because nothing more came of the incident, although the settlers were on the alert for several days.

In 1905 Ted's parents moved from the vicinity of Gavin's Point near Yankton to a homestead eight miles north of Draper, S. D. They went by train to Mitchell, then to Pierre, and overland by wagon to Draper. Here Ted's mother died of pneumonia. The four Sammons children were sent back to Yankton, S. D., to live with their grandparents, but in 1907 the grandfather decided to homestead in Lyman County, too, so he sold his farm and they moved back. By this time the railroad had been built to Draper, so they made the whole trip by rail except for the few miles out to the homestead shack. During those heartbreaking years an aunt and uncle of Ted's also died.

In 1910 the family finally gave up and they moved to Tripp County where another son had homesteaded. Grandfather died in 1914 and Grandmother Reed in 1927. Both were taken back to Mission Hill for burial.

In April 1925 the Rosebud Reservation was opened for Indian Land Sale. Ted and his brother Putt (James) bought 240 acres of land eight miles east of Norris, S. D., where they made their home in a one room shack for several years.

Later Putt, disgusted with batching, sold out his interest to Ted and moved to Rapid City, S. D.

In 1931 Ted was married to Anne Lyman of Alexandria, S. D., who came out to Mellette County to teach school.

Except for a few years spent in the Black Hills, during the depression of the 1930's when they herded sheep for a living, the Sammons have lived on the same place. During the years Ted was able to add to his spread, and in 1952 they built a new home a mile south of the original shack where they now live.

They have two sons, Allen, born in Rapid City in 1934 and now teaching in Riverton, Wyo., and Lyman (Butch), born in 1940 in Mellette County who is home at present.

Ted and Anne hope that their sons will believe in the future of this country as their parents have, also that one or both will take over the ranch when their folks are ready to retire a few years from now.

# Homesteading on Hanging Crow Flats

**By James Rennick**

We homesteaded on the Hanging Crow Flats near Joe Running Bear's place, north of Horse Creek, about two miles east of the Little White River. Mr. and Mrs. Noah Asbury and son, Kenneth, (my wife's family) were east of us about a mile. It was along the township line.

We came to Valentine, Nebr., in September 1912 and then up to Asburys. I started to teach school in the old Gary house about October 1, 1912. This was a log house, sided over with siding; it was on an Indian allotment that belonged to Henry Gary, a mix-blood who lived north of Wood at that time. Fay, my wife, was also a teacher and taught part of the time for me, while I worked occasionally for James Mitchell and George Schmidt. The children who went to the school there, were the Funk children, James and Mary Leighton, Jimmie Winters, the Mitchell children and Kenneth Asbury.

An odd coincidence about that old Indian house is, that after I became Indian Boss Farmer and was stationed at the Wood Issue Station, Mr. Gary wanted permission to sell the old house and I got the authority from the Rosebud Indian Agency for him to complete the deal.

I also taught at Twin Buttes, Blackburn (or Biggerstaff), the McCauley school at Neville. Then in the fall of 1916 I took civil service exams at Rapid City. On January 4, 1917, I took charge of the Indian Day School at Upper Cutmeat. In June 1917 I was transferred to Indian Farmer position at the Butte Creek Issue Station near Wood, S. D. In 1919 I was transferred to the Ponca District in Milks Camp Day School, was there for five years, then came back to the Wood Station (Butte Creek), then went to Oklahoma in the fall of 1926. I was in the Indian Service for about 30 years, then transferred to the Bureau of Reclamation at Estes Park, Colo., and Federal Center until July 1, 1954. That made 37½ years with Uncle Sam before I retired.

Gary House

Our daughter, who was born at the Wood Issue Station during the awful flu epidemic, November 21, 1918, now lives in Houston, Texas.

While I was teaching at Twin Buttes, I played in the town orchestra with several others. It was led by Miss Brodball. Mr. Mountain played the trombone and I played the flute.

**THE GREEN LIVERY AND FEED BARN**
All Kinds of Feed for Sale. Good Place To Put Up Your Team.
Good Livery Turn Outs. — Kenneth Mellott, Mgr. — Wood, S. D.
(Mellette County Pioneer, 1917)

# Stories of Gray Wolves

By Paul Reutter

Some of the old-timers could tell some real stories about the Grays.

I'll try to put into this book, a few of the stories told me by some of the men that I knew.

One story goes that a steer (two years old) left the place in the winter time. The people saw him go but didn't think anything of it. They would soon ride out as he couldn't get far since it was just a small pasture he took off into. One of the men happened to look up and saw a gray heading for the little pasture so he rode out there immediately but got to the steer too late as the wolf had severed his ham strings and they had to kill it. He tried to catch the wolf but the snow was deep and crusted so the wolf stayed on top of it and the going was heavy for the horse so it got away.

* * *

One man saw a gray wolf and took after it on horseback to try to rope it. The horse was a good one so he rode right up to the wolf. He threw his loop, only to have the wolf bite the rope in two. He tied another noose and tried again and had the same thing happen again. He carried a six gun so took it out and shot the wolf.

* * *

When the wolves were about gone out of this part of the country, the smart ones were all that were left and they caused a lot of loss in livestock. Ten ranchers got together and each offered $50.00 bounty for each wolf making $500.00 bounty on each one brought in. Fred Hanson, a very good hunter and trapper took the job of cleaning up these pests. He would start after a wolf and stay right on his track until he brought him in. He had the use of any rancher's horses if he needed them and the cooperation of all the ranchers.

He was right on the trail of one of them when it was coming evening and the wolf was tired. The wolf thought he'd make it into the Badlands and was within a few rods of them when Fred shot the wolf from quite a distance.

He was right close on the trail of another one of these last ones when it stepped into one of his traps. He was close to another one of them when the wolf played out and crawled into a hole. Fred unsaddled his horse and lay down on the hole to go to sleep as night was coming on. He dug the wolf out the next morning.

**Fred Hanson, State Trapper, and a Grey Wolf**

The last one he took after was called "three toes" and was almost pure white. He told me that he thought he'd never get that one. The wolf finally left his home range thinking, I suppose, to lose Fred but Fred got him too. There were six of these wolves that were the last in the country and it took Fred Hanson about two years to get them.

* * *

Some Indians who lived in the southwest part of Mellette County decided to move camp and go visit some of their friends several miles away. They had made the trip and noticed a certain very nice saddle mare that was soon due to foal wanted to go back so they put her on the other side of a fence. They retired for the night thinking she would be alright but when they arose the next morning the mare was gone.

A couple of the men took the back trail and had gone about 15 miles when they found her dead. The wolves had killed her and had eaten most of her. They went back to camp, got some rifles, went back to where the mare was and got two of the gray wolves. The spot where the mare was killed is less than two miles from where we now live. There had been seven wolves eating on this poor little mare. These animals were a terrible menace to livestock and I for one am very glad that I've never seen a wolf as they were all gone before I got here.

# The Jake Ring Story

By Blanche Kaufman

It was in 1925 that Jake Ring brought his wife and little son, Irwin, from southwest of Colome, S. D., to the Norris community to make their home. Jake had just bought the first 1925 Model T truck that was sent into Winner. He loaded it with household goods and supplies and drove out to Mellette County. In the meantime, two boys, Fred Wild and Reinhold Ring, drove out a loaded hayrack and 12 head of cows. The boys changed off, driving the team and wagon or walking and driving the cows.

Rings lived on the Yellow Bird place the first year. At the Indian land sale they bought a quarter of land, four and one-half miles southeast of Norris and they leased two other quarters.

During threshing, the first year, the little boy disappeared. Mrs. Ring couldn't find him and it was getting toward night, so they stopped the machine and the whole threshing crew went looking for him. They finally found him and his dog, far back in a corn field where he was eating raw roasting ears.

Jake Ring first used a Fordson and small machinery but over the years their farming operations have expanded in many ways. They now use big diesel tractors and have a complete line of the latest, most modern machinery.

They have tried many soil conservation practices, built dams, planted trees, and did some experimenting with irrigation.

The family grew to include seven boys and one girl. The daughter and two sons are married and live in the neighborhood. One son is still in high school and another is employed in the bank at Mission, S. D. The other boys work with their father to handle the farming and cattle raising. They raise Black Angus cattle.

Rings have been doing some cattle feeding for a number of years. They raised alfalfa and other forage which they stored in a pit silo. This year they are expanding the feeding operation and have constructed two Harvestore silos with the latest automatic feeding equipment to handle this part of the business.

They have a large modern home, several big steel buildings, barns and bins. Last year a windstorm struck the place. It lifted a large steel grain bin up over the R. E. A. line and set it down, upright, behind two other bins. A cattle shed, which had just been completed, was destroyed. It has since been replaced.

**Jake Ring Home, April 1961**
(Picture taken by Joe Cannon)

Two of the boys fly planes, which they often find helpful in checking new calves or in locating stray cattle.

# White River, My First American Home

**By Rev. James E. Robinson**

During the early part of the year 1920, I received a call from Doctor J. D. Perrin, superintendent of South Dakota Congregational Churches, to accept the pastorate of a small mission church in a town in South Dakota, called White River, on the Rosebud Reservation. The call came to my home in Nelson, England, where I lived with my wife and a son, Alwyn, who was five years of age. Knowing nothing about South Dakota, and anxious to serve a church somewhere in the U. S. A., I accepted the call and arrived in White River during the month of September 1920.

To describe my impressions upon arrival in the frontier town would take many pages of print. We got to Murdo after three days and nights of train travel across the country from New York. Here we were met by the Congregational minister of the city of Murdo and taken to the restaurant for breakfast, after which we went by stage, overland to White River.

The "stage" was an old Model T Ford, carrying the mail and whatever passengers might be going across. As we drove over the partly graded roads, I was reminded of the western movies I had seen on the screen in England. Here indeed was the West, with prairie and short grass, with cowboys and Indians, with gullies and creeks. Here began a new life for better or worse. On we went, across the prairies, uphill and downhill for 30 miles until we came in sight of our future home — White River.

The stage driver dropped us at the Post Office and directed us to a little house a few blocks from the Post Office which was the parsonage and destined to be our home during the next three years. As he deposited our grips outside the door and we walked into the house, we were met by a carpenter who welcomed us with the phrase, "What are you doing here?" I informed him that I was the new preacher and that I had come five thousand miles to take the duty of minister of the Congregational Church. He looked at me rather coldly, "You had better go back where you came from. I do not think they want you here." I answered that I could not do that, because I had no money left and I had made a promise to stay one year.

Such was my introduction to my new duties in a pioneer town in Mellette County in the year 1920. That afternoon Mrs. McLean came over and with the aid of a few women fixed the little four-room cottage up so that we could eat and sleep there until such time as our furniture, purchased in Chicago, would arrive.

To give my opinions of the first few weeks in White River would not be interpreted as an expression of friendship for the town or state. In two days, I was terribly homesick and if I had had the money I would have returned to Connecticut or back to England. But lack of money and human kindness, plus the sanctity of a promise, kept us at our post.

After living for 30 years in a land where trees, grass and flowers grow profusely, we found it difficult to adjust ourselves to the sand and prairie of South Dakota. The hot sun of the summer months and the below zero temperatures of winter were so different than the mild and rainy seasons of England. Though the adjustment was somewhat difficult, we soon were quite happy in our new work and environment and new friendships. So long as memory functions, I shall never forget the McLanes, McLeans, the Fridys, the Baumans, the Joneses, and so many other families who opened their hearts and homes to us. Three years we lived among those pioneer people. The little church grew in members and interest. We became "Americanized."

It was in White River that I took out my first papers. My second son, Charles, was born there and thus became a citizen before his father. When I arrived in Mellette County, I was in every way a tenderfoot, but during the three years I lived there, I had traveled over every trail in the country, had put my hand to many tasks that necessity drove me to and had learned that some of the finest virtues are hidden beneath rough exteriors.

So many incidents rush to mind as I pen these lines. My first impression of the little church which was being used as a classroom for the Public School through the week; my first effort to save the Mission point at Neville when I started to walk from White River and was picked up by Simon Fridy, only to learn when we got there that no service had been called; my first

Thanksgiving meal at Happy Hollow and how I marveled at the display of food on the tables.

How patient those good people were as I endeavored to minister to them in my English way. How I valued the friendship and the kindness of so many of the men and women who have since gone to their final reward. Memories that bless and burn, that open up the wounds and then bring back the healing hand of time. Forty years have passed since Mother and I, and a boy of six years looked across the prairies and were told by the mail carrier, "There is White River." Yes, my heart sank into my shoes, but there was no turning back. We had come to the "Point of No Return."

Mother has gone from us. She entered into her reward two years ago. She was a wonderful woman, a loyal partner, and a loving wife. Alwyn, the oldest boy, is living in Mitchell, S. D., and has two children. Charles, who was born in White River, is in New York City, an optical engineer, and has two children. Neville, the youngest boy, is an industrial engineer in Saudi Arabia, and has one daughter.

Myself: After spending 37 years in South Dakota and serving five churches, receiving my D.D. from Yankton, S. D., in 1956, came to Tucson, Ariz., where I served as a church visitor for three years and where Mother passed away.

**Rev. and Mrs. J. E. Robinson (Picture taken in Mitchell several years ago.)**

My present residence is the Pilgrim Place, a home for retired ministers here in Claremont, Calif. I have just remarried, to the widow of a minister who served a church at Pierre, S. D. Thus life goes on — closing one door and opening another, but always moving to that ultimate goal, Eternal Joy and Happiness.

# From College to Ranching

**By Pink Sandy**

One weekend, while attending the University of Nebraska at Lincoln in the fall of 1911, I boarded a train bound for Gregory, S. D., to register for the Rosebud Land opening.

The first words the trainload of passengers heard upon entering the South Dakota towns were "Suckers, Suckers." That was the way the land-hungry passengers were greeted at each stop on the Northwestern Railroad stations from Fairfax to Gregory.

In Gregory the passengers lined up in a long line and paid a small registration fee, also giving their name and address. In a few days after registering, the cards were drawn out of a barrel or box and the lucky holders of these numbers were notified. My number was 312, which meant that 311 other people had a chance to pick a claim before I did.

In April of 1912, the filing on the claims took place in White River. The homesteaders could get some help on picking which land they wanted to file on by paying a fee of $25.00 or more to some men called locators. These men had some idea how the land in the different quarter sections had been classified by the Government. The land opened for homestead varied from level to rough, so some was more valuable as farm land and some more suitable as grazing land. As I remember it, the appraised price varied from 25c to $6.00 per acre, the higher priced land generally being some river bottom land along the Big White River near the northern border of Mellette County.

While I was in White River I met a man by the name of Sam Brown, who owned a ranch on the north side of the Big White River, about seven miles southwest of Okaton. He knew the lay of the land open to homestead entry in that locality and upon his advice I filed on NW 8 44-30. My homestead was located on a large flat, about one mile from the river. The old Sam Brown ranch is now headquarters for the Earl Wedean ranch.

**The Little Badlands between Wood and White River**

Early homesteaders at Toledo, S. D.

Also while I was in White River, waiting for my turn to file on a homestead, I met Bert Humphrey. Bert and I hired a couple of saddle horses from the livery stable and took a ride out northwest of White River. We rode up north as far as the old Government fence, which was located south of the Big White River and ran east and west just south of where the Andrew Swan ranch is now located. This fence was built by the Government to keep the big Texas herds, which were located to the north, from getting on the Reservation. Also, it kept the Indian cattle within the Reservation boundary. The Matador Cattle Company held large leases around where Murdo is now. After the land in Mellette County was filed on, this Government fence was given to different Indians or sold to individuals and most of it was all torn down.

After filing on my claim, I returned to Lincoln to finish my sophomore year in the University of Nebraska in 1912. Then, in July of 1912, we drove out from Gretna, Nebr., to White River, then on out north to the Post Office and store called Toledo, S. D. This was operated by Wilbur Mallett and was the main trading point in that area.

This Post Office, known as Toledo, was discontinued a few years after the homestead land was opened as most of the homesteaders left as soon as they proved up on their claims. Toledo was on the south side of the Big White River, but was actually in Jones County as the river changed its course about 1900. It left a large tract of land south of the new river bed. This Post Office was south of where the Herman Brost ranch is now located.

Patrons at Toledo, S. D. Pink Sandy on horse.

After arriving at the Wilbur Mallett ranch, we managed to drive up to where my claim was supposed to be located. Not knowing exactly where it was situated made it necessary to do some measuring. We found a steel stake with the Indian allotment markings on it near the Whitemouse log house. By measuring from there, north about three miles, we found the land which was my homestead. It was on a large flat about a mile from the river and about the loneliest place in the world with no neighbors except prairie dogs and rattlesnakes.

After returning to the Toledo Post Office, where we visited for a day or so, my father and brother returned to Gretna, Nebr. I stayed with Wilbur Mallett and went with him on one of his bi-weekly trips to Murdo for mail and supplies. I purchased a tent and some equipment from Art Zickrick's father, who was operating a store in Murdo at that time.

Clara, a sister of Mrs. John Hight, who worked at Toledo, S. D., for Mrs. Wilbur Mallett.

Then I went to live on my claim, and, until a cabin could be built, I lived in a tent. About October 1, 1912, I bought a 12 x 14 homestead shack from Jack Williams. He had a homestead just east of the location of the present Herman Brost ranch, along the Big White River.

About September 1912, they needed a teacher for

**Inside Pink Sandy's (with gun) shack. Note Gibson Girl pinups!**

the Sam Peterson school, which was located about eight miles southwest of where the overhead crossing is now on Highway 16. This viaduct is seven miles west of Murdo. Well, I got the job of teaching at the salary of $40.00 per month. I had as pupils, Adolph and Fred Burnette, Verna, Grace, Goldie and Ivan Peterson, also Okie Arnott as my regular students. There was also a Giroux who attended part of the time. There were some other children who came to school during some of the term. I used to lift Adolph Burnette onto his pony after school. Adolph Burnette is now a successful rancher, having bought the old John Burnette ranch several years ago.

**Sam Peterson School, taught by Pink Sandy, 1912-1913.**

After getting my homestead shack rebuilt, my main occupation was teaching school for nine months. I rode horseback to and from the school, which was about four miles from my home. On the way to school I rode through the Mike Miller ranch, which was on the north side of the river, and which I now own.

During March 1913, we had a very bad blizzard and many cattle perished and also quite a few horses froze to death. The train into Murdo never arrived for three weeks.

After finishing my first school term, I went to work for John Burnette for $25.00 per month and I worked there until I proved up on my homestead in the fall of 1913. You could prove up on your claim after 14 months of residence or you had the privilege of waiting five years. If you waited to prove up, there were no taxes to pay during that period but your taxes started as soon as you got your title to the land from the Government.

The summer I worked for John Burnette was a very enjoyable as well as a helpful one. I learned a lot about ranching and the cattle business. John Burnette was raised by Adam Smith, who had his ranch just west of the Burnette ranch, then later built a new ranch just north of the Leslie Leek ranch, and eventually he moved to the Pine Ridge Reservation.

**At John Burnette Ranch, 1913. Henry Helgerson, Diego (?), Mrs. John Burnette, John Burnette on horse, Pink Sandy, Clementine and Grace Burnette, Pearl Mallett, Grandpa and Grandma Giroux.**

After proving up on my homestead in the fall of 1913, I rode on horseback to Gretna, Nebr. It was a distance of about 450 miles and it took me nine days to make the trip. Now you can make the same trip in nine hours or less in a car.

I went back to college for one year, then started farming in Nebraska, near Gretna. I farmed there until 1920 when the south part of my present ranch was purchased. Now my ranch has grown from that homestead claim to nearly 5,000 acres. It is one of the best

**Some Homesteaders, Mallett Ranch**

**Branding Cattle, Adam Smith Ranch, A-S**

ranches along the Big White River and one where those Hereford cattle really get fat.

South Dakota is one of the greatest states and Mellette County has developed very much in the last 50 years. Part of my ranch is in Mellette County and part of it is in Jones County.

* * *

### 45TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Mr. and Mrs. P. W. Sandy celebrated their 45th wedding anniversary with open house at their home in Murdo, June 21, 1961. Guests were served from the buffet table centered with the wedding cake. Mrs. Joy Howell, Bristow, Nebr., cut the cake; Laura Heyden, Murdo, poured; Mrs. Warren Sandy and Mrs. Dean Sandy served; and Mrs. Howard Newsome, Cody, Wyo., was in charge of the guest book.

Margaret H. Williams and Pink W. Sandy, both of Gretna, Nebr., were married at Burwell, Nebr., June 21, 1916, by Rev. E. E. Shafer. They farmed at Gretna, Nebr., until 1920 when they came to Jones County. Mr. Sandy had homesteaded in Mellette County in 1912, just across the river from their present ranch. They moved to Murdo and their youngest son, Dean, and son-in-law, Wayne Esmay, run the ranch.

Mrs. Sandy teaches first grade in Murdo.

All the children and grandchildren were present, Mr. and Mrs. Wayne Esmay, Vickie, Wayne, Wanda Dee and Jon; Mr. and Mrs. Dean Sandy, Stanley Pink, Mickey and Sabrina, of Murdo; Mr. and Mrs. Joy (Maurine) Howell, Linda and Edward, Bristow, Nebr.; Mrs. Howard Newsome (Helen), Cody, Wyo.; Mr. and Mrs. Warren Sandy and Mary Lou, Laird, Colo.

Other out-of-town guests were Mr. and Mrs. Chet Wildermuth, Moline, Ill.; Mrs. L. E. Borders, New Underwood; Mrs. Hayes Jones, Anna Novey, Joe Novey, Sr., and Mr. and Mrs. William Hay, all of White River; Harold K. Myers, Mitchell; and Mrs. Stanley Addison, Belvidere.

# The Mission Creek Pool Roundup

By Mrs. N. L. Schervem

Nels Louis Schervem filed on a homestead in Riverside Township in Mellette County in 1914. He came to South Dakota from Minnesota at the age of three with his parents. They lived on their homestead until he moved to Mellette County where he has resided ever since.

**A. N. Schervem's log house, built in 1894. This house is still standing on what is now the Floyd Sletto ranch on White River.**

* * *

### The Government Fence

This fence was built along the Big White River about 1900. It had five barbed wires and native posts one rod apart. It was built by the Indians under the supervision of the Boss Farmer. They received a dollar and a quarter per day and it took about a year to build.

Every river bottom had one gate, padlocked, and the line riders had the key. Each rider had about 12 miles to ride and check each day. In spite of that, the "White Man's" cattle got in. These were strays from the Cheyenne and Bad Rivers. During the winter months, the cattle drifted with the storms and their outfits sanded the ice on the river, lowered the fence and put the cattle on the Reservation where there was better grass. All this was done when the "line rider" was out of sight, of course.

**Louis Schervem**

In 1902, the Whites had orders to round up their cattle and get them off the Reservation and pay one dollar per head for trespassing. This was the beginning of the 1902 Roundup, extending from the Missouri River to the Pine Ridge. There were about two dozen roundup wagons.

After that roundup, the "Big Outfits" rented areas in the Rosebud Reservation for one dollar a head for the year, until Tripp County opened up in 1908.

* * *

### Vivian Bridge Across the Big White River

In 1925, before Highway 53 was a state highway, this bridge was built; it was completed in 1926. The construction company was Jennings and another concern from Britton, S. D. The piers were all dug by hand, and with plenty of trouble. During one June rise, the river came up so high it took most of their falsework down the river. All the cement was mixed on the east side of the river and the workers wheeled the cement in wheelbarrows to each pier. It was quite a contrast to the mechanized methods used in building the new Missouri bridge at Pierre, now under construction.

### The Mission Creek Pool

There are so many old-time stories to write about, I'm going to limit this to one roundup.

As a youngster, I, Louis Schervem, rode with my oldest brother, Erik, and knew every brand from the mouth of White River to Westover and some from along Bad River. Erik was a 1902 cowboy and passed away in 1960.

The Mission Creek Pool met at the Halgrimson ranch on Big White River. This pool was considered a small outfit, consisting of ranchers mostly along the White River from Swede Anderson's ranch east of the Sedgwick ranch to the Petan ranch and north to Medicine Creek, and sometimes following the Black Hills Trail. This roundup was held in the spring and fall of each year for a period of six or seven years. Not all furnished riders, but instead furnished horses, so that each rider had from eight to ten horses to use. They had one cook wagon (four-horse team), one bed wagon (two-horse team), and a cart with a stove on it. Their camp was always near some water and never had along any water barrels.

The night-hawker drove the bed wagon with a pilot (rider) to show him the way. This was usually a ten-mile trip each day. A horse herder chased the horses and they followed the wagons and always were ahead of the cattle.

In each community they rounded up cattle at every stop, near a dam or creek, cut out the association cattle and took them along, which they called the day herd. Each day, the cut-out cattle were put in with the day herd. When they got back to their home range, they were left to range until another roundup. There was free range at that time.

Each owner paid so much per head for what cattle he owned, so as to pay for the wagons, harnesses, and the grubstake. The cook, nighthawker, and horse-wrangler were all on salary.

I was not with the outfit but my brother, Erik, rode for my father. When he was near home, I was sent to their camp with clean clothes for him. Erik Schervem and Pete Clausen were sent from Petan's place, up west on Black Pipe and then worked on down along the river.

The cattle owners in the Mission Pool were: Petan, Wilske, Zoske, Anderson Brothers, Alfred Anderson, Duncan, O. N. Schervem, K. Knutson, Charles Selland, Thor Anderson, O. Helgeson, Hogan Schervem, K. & H. Hagenson (K. Hagenson is living at Rapid City, S. D., and is the only rancher left of this group, April 1961), Halvorsgaard, Halgrimson, M. Helgeson, N. C. Clark, Louis Hubben, Gordon, Ed Blunk, A. Anderson, J. J. Boe, Swinson, Jorgen Clausen, Lyder Vik, Sturdevant, Simmons, and Mattson Brothers.

The wagon bosses through those years were Nels Hagenson, Joe Simmons, Paul Petan, and Albert Anderson. This pool was considered to have the best cutting horses.

Mission Creek runs into the Big White River at the new Presho-Winner bridge. An Indian school was once located one mile east of there but no traces of the buildings are there now.

**South Dakota's Cowboy Governor from Mellette County, Tom Berry, leading horse in parade at 1902 Cowboys' Convention at Ft. Pierre (1950). Empty saddle in memory of Tom Jones. Notice old Hardware sign.**

# Schmidt and Heinert Story

### Mrs. Walter Schmidt

When I was a little girl, my folks lived in a very crowded section of Russia. I was only four years old when my father, Daniel Heinert, brought his family to America, but I can still remember a little about the ship. We were on the ocean for 16 days, nothing to see but water all around us. The people were very crowded on the ship and many of them were seasick. We were usually served bread and soup but occasionally we had potatoes and meat.

We must have landed in New York. From there we came by train to Butte, Nebr., where Mother's uncle, Peter Mohl, lived on a nice farm.

There were eight of us, our parents and six children. Sister Martha was only three weeks old when we boarded the ship. Mohls had a seven-room house and one child. We lived with them for about four months.

The older girls and brother, George, helped with the chores and the field work on Uncle Peter's farm. Father worked wherever he could until he found a place to live near Dallas, S. D. He took up a homestead about two miles north of there.

Mother's brother let the folks have six cows to milk and they were to pay for them when they were able. That was how they got their start in cattle. Dad built a barn of lumber and the family lived in it while he dug a cellar about 10 x 16 feet. We lived in this cellar about three and one-half years. He built a chicken house and a small hog shed of sod.

Father and my two sisters worked out most of the time during the first three years. Brother George helped with the farm work at home; Mother and my brother, Chris, did the milking and the chores, while I took care of my two little sisters. Frieda was born in 1906. Sister Marie went back to work for Mohls and stayed there four years.

In 1908, Dad built a five-room frame house and we were so happy to be living in a real house again.

Sometimes Dad walked to the places where he worked and stayed there nights. When the farmers hired his horses also, then he would ride back and forth, to and from work.

The Guenther Brothers, Earl and Ferdinand, were land agents. They brought my father and Philip Kaiser out west to look at land. In 1909 Father and Mr. Kaiser each bought a half section of land about four and one-half miles northwest of Cutmeat. Father's land was the east half of section 3 39-33 and Philip Kaiser's was the west half of the same section. This was in Todd County.

Father and his son, George, and Mr. Kaiser and his son, John, moved out here with two wagons and four horses, bringing their breaking plow, corn planter, and other things they needed for building and farming.

They lived in a tent until they had a 10 x 14 granary built. They broke sod and planted corn, potatoes, watermelons, and other things. They also planted potatoes and vegetables at Dallas so we had plenty to eat until spring. Brother George said the crops were very good that year. Sister Amalia had been working out for the neighbors, doing field work and housework for thirty-five cents a day. In August, Dad came back and took her with him to cook for him and George and three carpenters. She was seventeen years old.

During this time, Dad or Mr. Kaiser would come to Dallas about once a month to get supplies of meat, bread, butter and cheese that their wives had prepared for them. These trips were made with a wagon or large buggy. Whoever came would stay two or three days to rest the horses and help their families with the work they were doing. We raised a few hogs for meat and we butchered and cured our own pork, so there were always smoked hams and bacons ready to go back with them.

They had dug a well at the new home. A rope and a pulley with two pails were used to pull up the water. Father built a big house, four rooms downstairs and three upstairs. The house had two porches. The south porch was as wide as the house; it had a floor on top with a railing around it. The lumber for the building was bought at Crookston, Nebr. The men hauled the first four loads with four horses on each wagon. The Crookston Lumber Company hauled the rest. They sent out one wagon train of thirteen wagons with four horses to each wagon. I wish I had a picture of that wagon train. The carpenters came from Dallas and Gregory.

There wasn't too much field work on sod crops, just an occasional walk through with a hoe to cut the few weeds. But they put up quite a bit of hay. Every once in a while, a wagon load or two of Indians would stop to watch the buildings going up. They were very friendly and often bought watermelons.

In October, the men came back to move their families out. This took six wagons. One was a hayrack loaded with hay. We stayed one night at a nice hotel at Carter. It took three days to get to our new home. The cattle and the team and hayrack were a mile or two behind the other wagons. One man and two of the boys stayed with the cattle on Cutmeat Creek that night while the rest of us went on to our home.

It was night when we arrived so we didn't see until morning what our new homes were to be like. There were just the two sets of farm buildings with miles of open prairie all around except where the men had plowed and put in a little crop. Very little fencing had been done, just the corrals they had built by the barns to keep the cattle in at night. We still had to live in the granary while the house was being finished. From the south porch we could often see Indian wagons traveling across the country. Sometimes there would be five or six of them at one time, with horseback riders following them. These latter were usually the boys and girls and some were not more than five or six years old, but all were good riders. We could also see great bunches of long-horned cattle coming. They were really something to see and had us kids scared, but the Indians kept them off our land.

The next year the farm land was fenced and Father made some kind of a deal to graze our cattle, but we had to herd them during the day and put them in the corral at night or they would stray for miles.

In 1910, Philip Kilber bought the land east of us. They had five children. Mr. Kilber and his oldest son, Reinhold, also homesteaded in Mellette County in 1914.

There was no school for the children, so in 1910 the parents hired a teacher from Crookston, Nebr. The teacher boarded with the Heinert and Kaiser families. We had five months of school which was held in one room of the house where the teacher was boarding.

Mr. Kilber built a sod house with a shingle roof, and in 1911 he built an adobe barn from blocks made of straw, hay and mud.

The three men decided to build a little church of these adobe bricks. They made a large round hole in the ground about two feet deep. In this they mixed a quantity of mud and occasionally added hay and straw, then more dirt, hay, straw and water. They used horses to stir this mixture. Each horse had a rider; around and around they went while the men and older boys would push the mud back into the hole from the edges. Then more hay and straw was added and, of course, it took a lot of water, too. They had frames made of boards and when the adobe was properly mixed it was packed into these molds and set out to dry.

Lumber for the roof, shingles, doors, and window frames cost only $75.00. Labor was all donated. This became our little church and was used as a school house.

Incidentally, this little adobe building, built in 1911, is still standing. It was moved from the original site and is now used as a garage on the Walter Heinert farm.

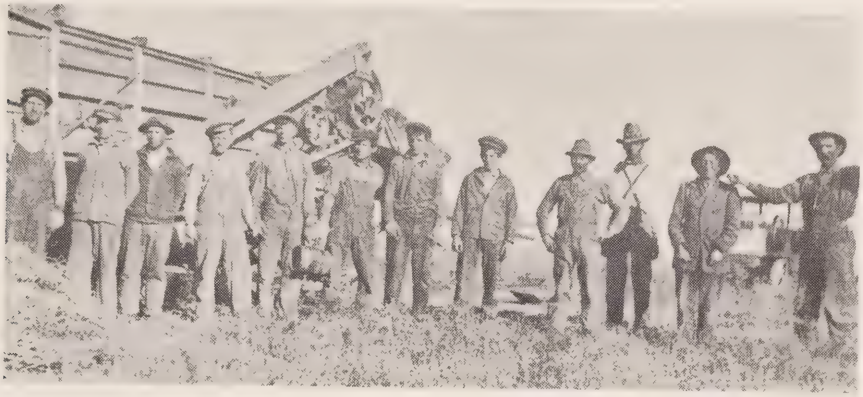
Crops were poor in 1911, 1912, and 1913. In 1914, the crops were better. In the dry years, the Russian thistles did good and were cut for hay. Some of them were used to build shelters for cattle. Two rows of posts would be set two or three feet apart, woven wire strung on them and the space between filled with thistles. This made a good windbreak.

We had many prairie fires those years. One bad fire, I remember, started two and one-half miles northeast of Father's place. The wind was strong that afternoon and the fire burned 20 miles long. The men could only keep it from spreading wider. The Indians came from all directions in their wagons with barrels of water, old blankets and sacks. Some used a raw hide soaked in water. Two ropes were tied to the hides and riders took the ends of the ropes and dragged the hide across the front fire to slow it down.

In the fall, during those dry years, Father would go to Crookston and bring home a wagon load of potatoes

Father and Mother Heinerts' 50th anniversary. Some grandchildren are not on the picture.

Mother Heinert and her five daughters, Sophia, Amalia, Martha, Frieda, and Alvina. This was a sister reunion on Mother's 86th birthday.



Early threshing scene at Mr. Heinert's. He is at right, showing Indians length of braids.

Grandpa and Grandma Heinert on their 50th wedding anniversary.

At left, George Whirlwind Soldier, age 75. Lived in Mellette County all his life. Born Nov. 1, 1886.

and flour for the winter. He also brought hard coal for use in the coldest weather; during the rest of the time our main fuel was cow chips. Dad would buy a large roll of dress material, then Mother and each girl would make a dress of the same kind of material. He also bought material for the boys' shirts. Mother knitted all our stockings from wool yarn. They were very warm stockings; we needed warm clothing in those winter days, because we rode horseback a lot.

We had some hard winters and bad blizzards, but the one I remember the best was in March 1917. It lasted three days. Father tied ropes together and tied one end to the gate post by the house. He made it to the barn and fastened the other end of the rope there. Then the boys followed the rope and helped care for the stock. The next day they could not get to the barn at all. By the third day, the wind let down some but the drifts were so deep it was hard to get any place. Mr. and Mrs. Gottlieb Schmidt were snowed in at our place until the fourth day. They were afraid their cows would all be dead. They shoveled a lot of snow before they finally got home. Imagine how surprised and glad they were to see their cows' heads sticking out of their shed roof. They had a straw shed and the cows had eaten off the roof and they were all just fine. They lived about a mile west of the Lutheran Church.

By 1915, there were quite a few homesteaders in Mellette County. Many of our neighbors were Lutherans and it didn't take long for us to get acquainted. Our get-togethers were at the homes of the parents. Mr. Heinert and Mr. Kilber both played the violin, and Mr. Kaiser played the accordion. Sometimes we would move some of the furniture out of the dining room so we would have room to play games and dance. The parents danced and enjoyed it as much as the young folks. Soon the boys learned to play instruments. John Kilber played the harmonica, George Heinert, the guitar, Chris Heinert and John Kaiser, the violins, and Robert Kaiser, the accordion. Neighbors would invite us to their houses to parties and dances and we had a lot of fun.

In 1914, the Carl Huber family came to homestead in Mellette County near where the Kaufman Brothers lived, close to old Cedarbutte.

Our first public school was built about two and one-half miles from my father's place in 1917. It was on land donated by Peter Ries and it is still called the Ries school. Blanche Cannon taught school in the Ries home while the school building was being built. There were 18 or 20 pupils then.

We bought most of our groceries from John Helzers' store at Cutmeat. There was another store there that I believe was run by E. J. Hultburg. There was also an Issue Station, a matron's cottage, a Post Office in the store and the homes of Helzers, Dave Parmelee and E. J. Hultburg. Jack Whipple carried the mail.

By 1915-1916, it was decided to have church services in the homes of John Galster or Philip Kilber once a month. This was about 13 miles north of my dad's place. The minister and wife went with a team and buggy. Usually three or four of us girls would go along on horseback. Potluck dinner was usually served after services, then the older people would visit and we girls would ride around looking for new families. We found that three out of five families belonged to some kind of Lutheran church. Soon they all came to our church; then in 1917 a new church, St. John's Lutheran Church, was built in Mellette County, five miles east of Norris, S. D.

We children did not go to many towns. We were to Norris a few times and to Cutmeat quite often. I went to Crookston in 1914 for the first time and I did not get to see White River until 1918.

As we grew older, we would get together and go sleigh riding on moonlight nights. The stars would be twinkling in the sky and you could see millions of little stars twinkling on the snow. If we got cold or sleepy, the horses were turned around toward home and just listening to the horses hoofbeats on the frozen snow would start us singing and we would sing our way home.

We were a large family and needed all the money we could earn, so all of us worked away from home whenever we could get a job. We girls did housework and the boys worked for the farmers and ranchers. In 1914, two of the boys rode 65 miles southeast to pick corn for a man in Tripp County. After three weeks Dad called them home to take care of 67 steers he had taken in to winter. They started at daybreak and rode through in one day. George said they felt like cowboys then. Dad bought some horses for the boys to break. All the neighbor boys would bring their horses over on Sunday afternoon and they would all practice riding, roping, and steer riding. We girls would watch the show and enjoyed it as much as the boys.

We girls also worked for the Day School teacher at the He Dog School, and also for Mrs. Alex Whipple. "Shorty" Reifel, Ben Reifel's father, used to go hunting with my dad.

The Indian people used to have big celebrations, especially around the Fourth of July. They wore the most beautiful costumes and the horses were trained to step in time with the music of the drums and the singing of the dancers. It was wonderful to see and we always looked forward to the Fourth of July celebration.

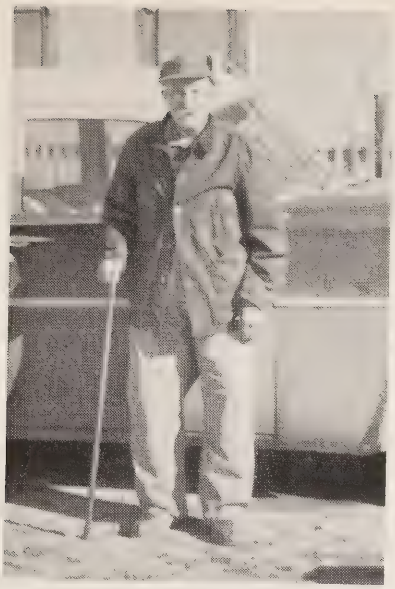
To us children, the West was wonderful, but I'm sure it must have been very hard for our parents to support the large family. We all helped with the farm work and chores. By 1918 we were milking 21 cows.

We were now allowed to choose the material for our dresses and we were well dressed. We wore high button shoes, sixteen to twenty buttons (the higher the shoe, the more stylish), and in the summer we had patent leather slippers.

* * *

Now I will tell you a story of my husband's family. Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Schmidt lived west of Scotland, S. D., near the Hutchinson County line. Walter was born there in 1897. They moved to Kaylor, S. D., where they ran a hardware store for three years. They moved back to the farm until 1915 when they sold out there and bought land in Mellette County.

In the spring of 1917, Daniel and his son, Walter, came out here to do some building and to put in some crop, on the N½ 17 40-32. They had a tent set up on a hayrack in which they lived. Later, the winds and rains got so strong that they had to put the tent on the ground. Two neighbors from back East came out to help them haul lumber from Belvidere, S. D., to build a big barn. Sometimes the Big White River was so high they would have to camp beside it until the



**Daniel Schmidt, age 89 on January 19, 1961**

water went down, sometimes for two or three days before continuing their trip. Occasionally they would stay at the E. W. Thode place while they waited.

Next, they dug a well and a basement for a house. As soon as the house was finished enough so they could live in it, Walter and his dad went back to bring Mother Schmidt and two daughters, Edna and Bertha, out to their new home. They shipped a car of livestock, lumber, furniture, etc., to Belvidere. Two neighbors, Alex Schmidt and Albert Richter, helped them haul this all down from Belvidere. This was very hard for the men. During one trip, they were caught in a rain and sleet storm. They pulled off the road by some haystacks and dug themselves into the stack to keep warm until morning. It was snowing in the morning but they came on home and got in late but safe.

By Christmas time, they had a little three-room log house built over a full basement and it was ready to move into. Walter says the years of 1917 and 1918 were the hardest years he ever went through.

Walter and his dad made a few trips to White River in their little Dort car, but Mother Schmidt had seen enough hills and curves on the trip out from Kaylor and did not care for any more.

Schmidts attended the Lutheran Church here. The older people were visiting together and the young people were going to parties and dances together. On July 20, 1919, Walter Schmidt and Sophia Heinert were married. They had the honor of being the first couple married in the new St. John's Lutheran Church, east of Norris, S. D.

We lived with Walter's parents until the spring of 1921. Then Dad, Mother Schmidt, Walter and I put up a little building, 16 x 24, on some land farther east. This became our first little home. We had a good crop of grain and corn that year, also a nice garden. I remember we dug 22 bushels of potatoes that fall. At threshing time, we had our log house ready to shingle. John Weisz and Rudolph Mohl, our brothers-in-law, and a neighbor, Henry Kaufman, helped us shingle our house so we could move in and use the other building for grain.

Daniel Schmidt and Daniel Heinert had bought an old Titan tractor at Kaylor, also a threshing machine. Walter repaired the tractor and they threshed for themselves and neighbors.

At that time, a threshing crew consisted of from 12 to 15 or more farmers living in the neighborhood. When they threshed close to home, they went home nights. Those from farther away stayed overnight, sleeping on their racks or in the granaries. They worked until dark and started again very early in the morning. The women cooked for all of those men; also with the help of the children, milked the cows, took care of the hogs and chickens and any other chores around the place.

The men fed and harnessed the horses by lantern light and were washed up for breakfast by sun-up. We women would get breakfast for six or eight men besides our own families, get the chores done and get ready to cook a big dinner. Often two or three neighbor women would come along with their men and help out with the cooking, serving, and dish washing. It would be long after dark before we would get our work done in the evening. Walter stayed with the machine most nights so he could get the machine lined up and be ready to start early the next morning. My sister, Frieda, stayed with me to help with the chores and other work.

Because of the threshing, corn picking and so much other work, we didn't get the floor laid in our log house. So I went to my sister, Mary's home when our first baby (Andrew) was born on December 3, 1921. While I was away, Walter and his dad put down the floor and finished the house.

We were hailed out in 1922 so Walter again ran the threshing machine and his sister, Bertha, helped me with the chores. In 1923, we had a good crop. We threshed two days at our place. Then the next morning at eight o'clock, our daughter, Viola, was born, on August 25th, so the threshing outfit moved to a neighbor and came back two weeks later to finish ours. In those days we didn't go to hospitals and seldom had doctors when our babies were born. Mrs. Wm. Kary, Sr., and Mrs. G. Waack were my doctor and nurse. Mrs. Kary had taken nurses training at the Cook County hospital in Chicago, so she was often called in when a baby was born in the neighborhood.

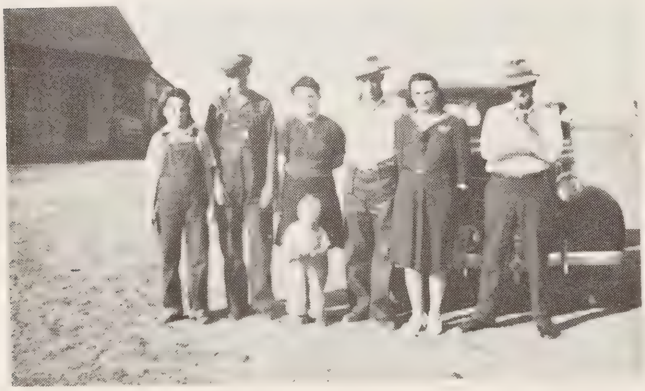
Times were better for a few years until the Thirties when the drouth began. The dust storms were so bad at times that we had to lay wet cloths on the window sills to keep the dust out of the house and the food. Those were the years when the men had to work on W. P. A., building Government dams with horses, plows, shovels, and fresnos. They also built some roads. Walter drove up to 12 miles to work some mornings and it was very late in the evening when he got home. Andrew and I did the chores. I also remember when people had to sell their cattle. Big cows only brought twenty dollars each. Calves that were too thin to butcher brought $2.00 per head. These were killed and buried in deep ditches. We had three little late calves and we kept them. Walter cut green thistles and weeds late in the fall and put up three stacks. We turned the calves to the stacks and they lived through the winter. People really went through hard times during those drouth years.

By September 1929, we had four children, two boys and two girls, and in September 1932, our baby daughter, Phyllis, was born.

Our two oldest children went to school in a school house that was built on Daniel Schmidt's land in the fall of 1917 and was called the Schmidt school then. Then in 1932 this school house was moved two miles east onto our land, SW 10 40-32. Later, it was Prairie View School and all five of our children went to this school.

**Prairie View School. Schmidt, Bertsch, Washburn, Wild and Nitchke children. (1933)**

In 1939 Father Schmidt retired and Walter took over the farm. Two of us moved the cows to this farm while the three youngest children stayed at the other place so they could go to school. Viola did the cooking, while Andrew took care of the range cattle. Walter and Andy would change places sometimes and the two oldest girls, Viola and Lucille, and I would also change places off and on. We were milking 16 cows and by April we had the furniture moved and all lived here in this house.



**Mr. and Mrs. Walter Schmidt, Andrew, Lucille, Melvin, Phyllis and first grandson, Fred Wayne Deutsch (1943).**

During those Dirty Thirties, some of the homesteaders lost their land and moved away, and some sold out. When the good years came back, good crops and more cattle were raised again and people began to build up their buildings and buy more land.

Our children are all married and four live on farms. Viola is married to Edwin Deutsch. Melvin and Andrew also live on farms, Melvin on the land where we started out; our old log house is still there but it is now used for a cattle shed. Andrew lives east of there on what we call the Jackson Crazy Bear land. Lucille is married to Alfred Deutsch and they live on his father's homestead. Phyllis is married to Kenneth Fernen and they live on his father's farm, 18 miles southeast of Mission, S. D.

We have improved the farm buildings here since 1939 and remodeled the house. We have electricity and running water for house and stock. If anyone is determined to make a home for his family, Mellette County is the place where it can be done.

In 1954, Mother Schmidt died at Kaylor, S. D. In 1956, Father Dan Schmidt moved out here. He is living in a little separate house next to ours. He was 89 years old on January 19, 1961. He is still able to be up and around; also likes to cook most of his meals himself. We were told that he might be one of the oldest pioneers still living in Mellette County. He has had lots of adventures in Mellette County.

One time, before the bridge was put over the Big White River, Walter and his dad had quite an experience there. People sometimes crossed by way of the cable. I never have, but Walter did. Walter used to ford the river at Thode's crossing. This time Walter and his dad, and Gottfried Schelske and his son, were taking three loads of hogs to Belvidere. Walter's team broke through the ice and the horses went down. One horse couldn't get up so Walter had to go into the ice water to unhook the horses and lead them out. They pulled the wagon out backwards with Mr. Thode's team. Walter had to get into the water again to steer the wagon by the tongue. He was nearly frozen when they got to Thodes. They spent the night at Thodes and dried his clothes. Next day they got the wagon across and went on to Belvidere, but it was four days before they got back home.

The Schmidts and the Heinerts have been very active in Lutheran Church work. Daniel Heinert helped build the first adobe church in Todd County in 1911. Before that, Reverend Hoffman had come from Crookston, Nebr., in November of 1909 and made arrangements to hold Christmas services for the Lutheran families in that vicinity. After that, he came three or four times a year to hold services at the homes of these three families, Kilbers, Heinerts, and Kaisers. If there was a funeral or a baptism, he would also be called.

The adobe church was called the Evangelical St. Emmanuel Church. When they were building the church, they needed $75.00 to buy lumber to complete it. Philip Kaiser made a trip to Freeman, S. D., to ask the congregation there for help. The Freeman people gave $75.00 so the church could be completed. The land on which the church and later the parsonage and cemetery were located was donated by Daniel Heinert who also built and donated the altar for the church. Each family provided its own bench. A parochial school was opened in this church building with Chris Rohlof, a student at St. Louis Seminary, as teacher. The catechism was studied in the German language during the forenoon, and in the afternoon reading, writing and arithmetic were studied.

Rev. George A. Walz was the first resident pastor, coming in 1913 or 1914. Reverend Walz, like student Rohlof, made his home with the members of the congregation until 1915 when a farm house was purchased and moved next to the church for a parsonage.

The first confirmation class in the adobe church included George Heinert, John Kaiser, Chris Heinert, Robert Kaiser, and John Kilber. In 1912, these young men were confirmed in the new church by Rev. John DeWald of Gregory, S. D.

Reverend Pullman of Stamford, S. D., made several trips by horse and buggy to serve this congregation. The next resident pastor was Rev. C. F. Kurzweg.

**Builders and Congregation of Adobe Lutheran Church**

**First Confirmation Class in Adobe Church**
(Details in story.)

In 1917, a new Lutheran church was built five miles east and one mile south of Norris in Mellette County. It was called St. John's Lutheran Church. Rev. G. A. Waack was installed in 1919 as the first resident pastor of this new church. He served here nine years. Rev. and Mrs. Waack celebrated their golden wedding anniversary on January 4, 1950, about a week before his death.

In 1927 the remaining members of St. Emmanual decided to close the little adobe church in Todd County and join the St. John's congregation.

In 1928 Rev. A. Oesch was called. Services had been conducted in German until October 1929 when it was decided to have English services every third Sunday, and soon all services were held in English.

In 1932 Rev. Walter Bonkowsky came for two years. From 1934 to 1937, Rev. E. Melchert served. Reverend Waack served as vacancy pastor until Reverend Walz arrived. In 1942 Rev. Gerhard E. Walters came. He was followed by Rev. A. W. Kraft in 1943.

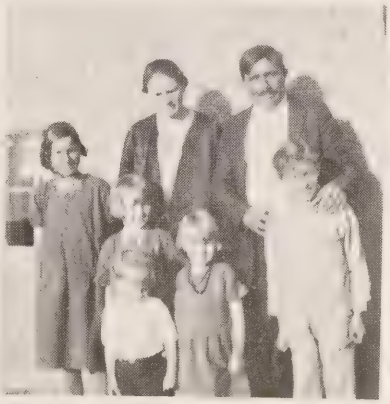
In 1944 it was decided to build a larger church on the same site. This new church was dedicated in July 1945. Reverend Kraft continued to serve this congregation until July 1950, when he had completed 50 years as a minister and retired.

Rev. Harold Kuechle was the next pastor for about five years. He was followed by Rev. C. E. Jones, and a new parsonage was built while he was here. Reverend Jones transferred to Rapid City in 1960 and Rev. David Ylvisaker accepted the call to St. John's Church at Norris, S. D.

At a recognition for members who had been in the church 25 years or more, which was held the summer of 1960, Daniel Schmidt was the oldest member present, both as to age and length of membership. Mr. Schmidt was 88 years old and had been a member of this congregation since 1917. He transferred here from Scotland, S. D., where he had been a member for many years.

And that is the story of the Schmidts and Heinerts. We have 22 grandchildren and still keep busy and happy on our Mellette County farm.

**John Kilber, George Heinert, Chris Heinert and Bob Kaiser near first Lutheran parsonage.**



**This is the Nitchke Family who homesteaded about 3½ miles northeast of the St. John Lutheran church near Norris.**

Church in Mellette County, near Norris (1943)—successor to Little Adobe.

Rev. and Mrs. Gerhard Waack, 1950

Lutheran Church near Norris, rebuilt in 1945. New parsonage built since.

# The John Sherwood's Story

By Mrs. Frank Vesely

John Irvin Sherwood of Ellston, Iowa, traveled through South Dakota after his graduation from college, on his way to North Dakota to work in the harvest fields. He liked the country and thought that some day he might like to settle down near Colome, S. D. Next he traveled south through Texas and Oklahoma; then he returned to Iowa.

In the spring of 1912, his brother, Glen, came to South Dakota for the filing, and filed on a number northeast of Wood. John wanted to be near his brother so he filed on a homestead one mile south of his brother's claim.

The Sherwood brothers lived together for a few months; then John returned to Iowa and married Miss Nellie May Weeda of Tingley, Iowa, on November 12, 1912. They came to the homestead in Mellette County to make their future home. For a wedding gift from John's father, John and his wife received a ten-dollar gold piece. With this, they bought a sewing machine and a washing machine.

They lived during that first winter in a house on the Hattenbach claim, while a two-room frame house was being built on their homestead. They moved into their own house in March of 1913.

The famous blizzard of March 1913 was one event that stood out in the memory of the Sherwoods' early days. John went to town in the morning. It was a warm, foggy morning. But before the day was over one of the worst blizzards of the early times had set in. The folks often told how the cattle drifted before the wind, and ended up standing frozen in some draw. I remember of Mother telling about her anxiety when the storm came up and Dad had not returned from town. However, he did come home safely, late that night, after getting lost and then letting his horse lead him home.

That first spring was spent in breaking sod for a garden and field. Like all early settlers in this prairie state, most of their fuel had to be hauled in from a railroad town or gathered from the timbered creeks of the area. Cowchips were also gathered to be used for fuel. Visiting neighbors played a large part in the early settlers' way of life.

In August, John's sister, Lovilla, came out from Iowa, to be with them. Sherwoods' first child, Margaret,

These pictures of Mr. and Mrs. John Sherwood were taken shortly before they were married and came to South Dakota.

was one of the first White children born in the Bad Nation Township. While Lovilla was staying in Dakota, she had the opportunity of buying the relinquishment to the quarter of land that was located between John's and Glen's homesteads. It was on this quarter that the Satree school house was built, which later became known as the Springview School. While Lovilla was proving up on her claim, she worked at several places in and around Wood, S. D.

The homesteaders missed their regular Sunday Schools and churches. Families began to gather for non-denominational Sunday School, first in the homes and later in the school house. This Sunday School later joined an organization called the Rosebud Valley Improvement Club. A combined Club and Sunday School met every two weeks for a while — often with picnics and sometimes with over one hundred in attendance.

The Sherwoods had their share of serious illnesses in those early days. One of the most serious was when their oldest son, Edwin, had diphtheria at the age of one and a half. Doctor Hunt moved Edwin and his mother to an old house near Draper, where they could be isolated and be near a doctor. Edwin was very ill and for a time his life was despaired of, but he recovered

John freighted, in the early days, from Draper and Winner for the other homesteaders, and also into Wood, S. D. He also maintained roads besides his farming and ranching activities.

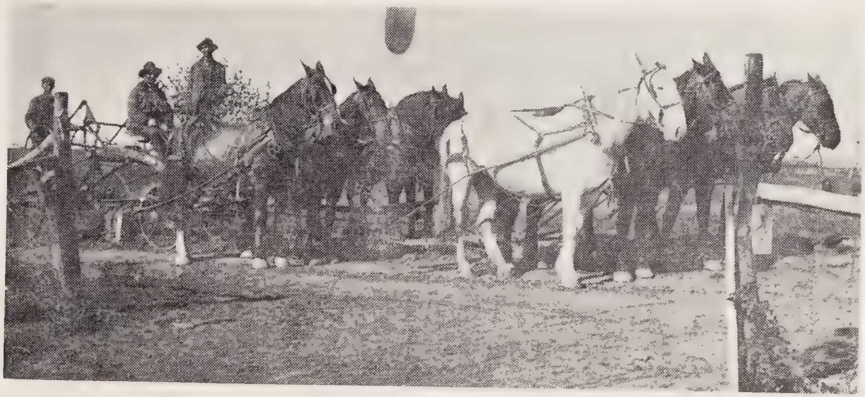
Mr. and Mrs. Sherwood have passed away but four of their children still live in Mellette County.

There were seven born in the family, all on the old homestead: Margaret, of Murdo, now Mrs. John Johnson; Edwin in Iowa; Everett; Arlene, who is Mrs. Frank Vesely of Wood; Irvin, who was killed in World War II; Howard, and Benjamin (Bennie lives in Wood, S. D.).

The Sherwood family lived on the homestead until 1938 when they bought a ranch on White Thunder Creek and moved there. This was the Don E. Terpin homestead. Everett and Howard still make their home there.

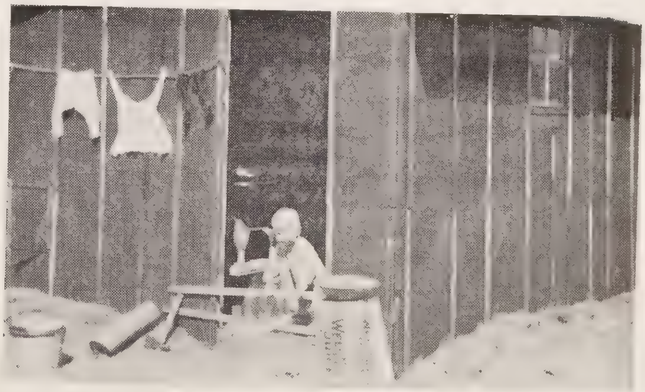
Homesteaders had all kinds of home remedies. Here is one I found among the folks' old papers:

Whooping Cough Cure — Holland gin, 1 pint; Paregoric, 1 ounce; Glycerin, 1 ounce; Strained Honey, ½ ounce. Take 1 teaspoonful every 3 hours. Also a physic must be taken (bet it was castor oil!). Whiskey may be used in place of gin. Also this is a good remedy for colds.



**This is the way we used to build and care for the roads. With more cars all the time, roads had to be built. Here John Sherwood uses four horses with a team of Fred Cline's and a team of Ivy Burnham's to do some road work. Ivy Burnham is at the controls of the grader, while Fred Cline sits on the grader and John Sherwood stands ready to drive. John Sherwood maintained the county road northeast of Wood from early in the 1920's until 1939.**

**Many happy times were had by the early settlers. One was when families would go together and gather wild fruit. Teams and wagons were the mode of travel and with a picnic lunch and children you were sure of a happy time, chigger bites and sunburn. A group of such plum pickers is represented here. Mrs. John Ham, Mrs. Pete Bachman and Mrs. John Sherwood and their families are in this group ready to start for a day of wild fruit picking.**



**A Young Homesteader**

# The Kerlin Story

**By Mary (Kerlin) Sholtz**

In order to set people at ease during an interview on radio or television, couples are often asked how they happened to meet. Children are asked how their parents happened to meet. The story of how my parents met is unique. I have no idea how many people remember it after 45 years, so I think it bears repeating. I have told it a few times and find it rather amusing, as occasionally, someone will laugh and give me a look that says, "That's a good story; how long did it take you to dream that up?"

My father, Charles W. Kerlin, was a homesteader in Mellette County, South Dakota. His land lay between White River and Wood. At five miles, Wood was closest. Dad was a bachelor at the time. He had built a shack on the land near a creek. He had taken up the homestead in 1912 and after a year in Des Moines, Iowa, working as a shipping clerk, he returned to South Dakota.

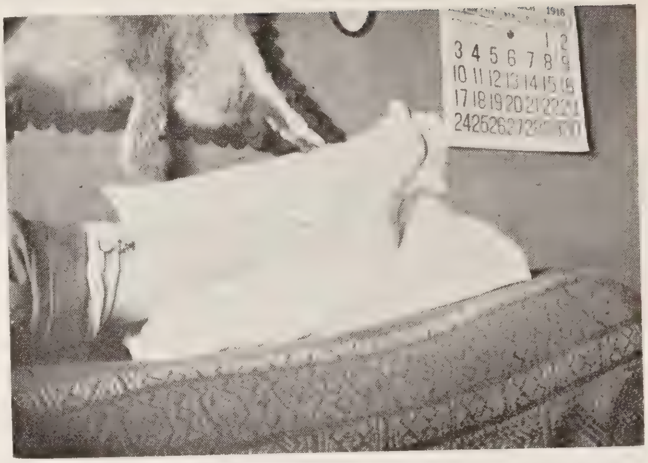
C. W. Kerlin Homestead

Upon being elected county auditor, he secured bachelor quarters, consisting of a couple of rooms over the bank. He had a buggy and a spotted horse named "Peanuts," which enabled him to go out to the homestead when not working in town. He planted, hunted, did his own cooking and killed rattlesnakes, drying and tanning the skins and saving the rattles. In 1913, he won second prize for the best display of tanned snakeskins at the Mellette County Fair in Wood.

One hot, dry day in July, 1916, poisonous fangs seared my father's flesh above the left ankle. The rattler had struck mercilessly, with no warning and Dad had missed seeing it, although he was ever on the alert, cautious not to get in the path of one. His first instinct was to kill the snake. Just as quickly, he applied a tourniquet with his handkerchief. Taking his jackknife from his pocket, he opened the wound and began to suck out the poison — hoping he was acting quickly enough. Finally help came. A tobacco-chew poultice was applied and Dad was readied to be taken to a doctor.

"Be sure to save the rattles from that snake and I want the skin, too," he said, as they helped him up.

Dad was placed under the care of a woman, a Dr. Schmitters. Somehow the wound became infected. Dad had little rest now and began to worry. He was concerned about tending the homestead and his work in town suffered. The danger of prairie fires out on the claim preyed on his mind. A prairie fire was really something, usually spreading very rapidly, doing a terrific amount of damage.



**The rattlesnake bite that became the legend of Happy Hollow.**

After much pain and deliberation, my father sent word to Omaha, Nebr., to secure a trained nurse. A young woman, named Ottillie Vavra, was sent to him. She came highly recommended both in character and nursing ability. With a devotion to duty seldom seen and aseptic care, the wound began to improve. Miss Vavra had quite a time saying "Mr. Kerlin," and it always came out "Kernel."

As the meticulous care continued, Dan Cupid began speeding arrows in the right direction. He was a fast worker. Two weeks from the time of the arrival of the nurse, they were standing side by side in the candlelit room, Charlie in his best suit, Ottillie in a fresh, clean nurse's uniform.

"I now pronounce you man and wife." . . . The words were spoken by Rev. H. C. Van Valkenburgh. The snakebite was not completely healed yet. But what could go wrong with a new helpmeet and nurse wrapped up in one, to carry on by one's side? It was August 28, 1916.

This union became a real family with the arrival of my brother, Richard Grant Kerlin, on June 21, 1917.

On September 1, 1920, I came along, not even bothering to wait for the doctor, who was just a few steps away. They named me Mary Lois Kerlin, but jokingly called me "September Morn" for a long time.

Doris Susan Kerlin joined us two years later on September 13, 1922.

Mrs. C. W. Kerlin, Doris (baby), Mary (glasses) and Dick (About 1923)

These were the Kerlin family. My parents meeting, we children's very existence, owed to a rattlesnake.

* * *

## TRIAL AND TRIBULATION

The two rooms over the bank in White River, S. D., were quite comfortable. A few feminine touches to what were once bachelor quarters made it home. Charlie Kerlin's bride adjusted well to her new surroundings. His friends made her more than welcome in the community. The homestead was beginning to get in her blood . . . the prairie grass, tall and green . . . the land, stretching to cover 480 acres, most of it unbroken sod. There was a creek running through it. Here was a butte. There were the badlands, just a few. Pasques and daisies sprung up prolifically. There was a spring with clear, cool water.

Mrs. Kerlin's competence as a nurse spread throughout the area. She held her own, ministering faithfully during the Spanish flu epidemic of 1918. Calmly, she would give instructions to a homesteader trying to assist a cow to calve. Many and varied were the crises to which she was summoned.

One summons was to the Burkinshaw place. They were neighbors to the Kerlins. Mrs. Burkinshaw had given birth to a new baby and something was wrong. Mrs. Kerlin was there for hours. She finally returned. Sober-faced, she grimly set about lining a small, sturdy wooden box with black cloth, securing it down smoothly with thumbtacks. The infant had been still-born. Mouth-to-mouth respiration failed, as did all else. Mrs. Burkinshaw, near hysteria, had to be calmed and comforted. The lined box was used as a coffin for the tiny body, for great was the poverty of the parents, the same condition of most homesteaders.

Another incident happened during a storm. It seems that Mr. and Mrs. Roy Gatton were making haste to town, the stork riding with them. A storm bore down upon them, and as they neared the Kerlin place, travel proved impossible. They'd wait out the storm at Charlie Kerlin's and be on their way once again. But the stork chose to follow them. Shortly, a son was presented to Mrs. Gatton in the Kerlin bedroom.

It was not unusual to shelter friends or strangers, banging on one's door to seek sanctuary from a blizzard. Sometimes it was a cyclone, depending on the time of year. Often drifts of snow were blown against the door, blocking the exit. A window would have to be opened, the snow loosened with a small coal shovel. After crawling through the open window, the way could be further scooped from outside and the exit cleared — not to mention paths to the well and livestock.

C. W. Kerlin (About 1923)

Through hardship and storm, each was his brother's keeper on the prairie, resourcefulness being the watchword.

* * *

## FOND MEMORIES

Many are the memories that I have of South Dakota and Mellette County, some by word of mouth, the rest by personal experience. Most, of course, are related to the Kerlin family life.

As a brother, Dick Kerlin was attentive, protective, always taking my hand as we crossed a street. Such was his affection for family, that I acquired the mumps on one side from his tender kisses, at a very early age. I keep wondering if I'll ever get them on the other side, even now.

When Dick started to school, his reluctance to leave the house, coupled with his eagerness to be polite, led him daily to cause our mother great concern. Once outside, on his way to school, he repeated, waving his hand all the while, "So long, farewell, toodle-oo, good-bye." Mother feared he might get run over or be late for school.

There was the time the piano arrived from Chicago. It was a Mason and Hamlin, one of the best. Dick took lessons from a Mrs. Pearsall, I believe, and proved to be an apt pupil. That piano is now in my possession. Doris, my sister, and I had lessons after we moved to Nebraska. Doris proved to have the most talent for music. My two oldest children, Gene and Virginia, have had lessons, too. The piano, being much used, is just part of the family.

One of my earliest memories was of the Manson's front porch. It was frequently adorned with Rodney, attached to his beloved banjo. They were inseparable and quite noisy.

My first "boy friend" was young E. G. Rudolph, Jr. I must have been three or four years old. We held hands and smiled at each other. Doris and I frequently played with Elaine and Nella Holland, and Hope Hodges. I recall that we buried our dolls in the sand, so that we would have something to dig up.

A day of anxiety and worry came, when my mother looked for me and I was nowhere to be found. Dad was summoned from the courthouse. Soon half the town of White River was searching and calling. Finally, they found me in the house, playing quietly with a doll behind a door. I had heard their frantic calls, but was too busy to answer.

Our home-life in White River has many happy memories. Dad worked in the courthouse as county auditor, clerk, and treasurer, consecutively. The fondest memory was of him reaching up to the bowl-shaped chandelier, suspended from the living-room ceiling. With the words, "Hocus-pocus, ginger-ocus," he produced handsful of candy for us. To me that was the height of magic!

Magic was what impressed me most, as we attended the chautauquas that came to town. The long streamers of colored banners that were brought forth from sleeves and various impossible places were most fascinating to my young eyes.

We were taught songs over and over, until one day a gentleman came to our house. When he asked my name, I responded loudly and clearly by singing, "My name is Yon Yonson, I come from Visconsin, etc., etc.," repeatedly.

Looking in the store windows at White River during the Christmas season was a joy to my little-girl heart. I invariably saw a doll I wanted and each year, the one I desired was waiting for me on Christmas morning. Dolls and toy dishes were always my delight. My own four-year-old daughter reflects the same delights today, as I watch her at play.

Bachelorhood and homesteading often mirrored the humorous and the ridiculous. My father frequently told of the lady-bachelor who was new in the community. Some kind neighbor had given her some bacon. Complete frustration had overtaken her as she expressed her appreciation; but since she was absolutely without any cooking fat, she did not know how she could cook the bacon.

Dad had tried every phase of cooking imaginable and was quite a culinary artist in his own right. A loaf of homemade bread just about got him down, however. He let it raise too long and when it was finally baked, it proved to be hollow and hard as a brick. He threw it to the dog, who sniffed it disdainfully and sauntered away.

Mother told of carrying buckets of water upstairs to their rooms at White River. Being hard to come by, it cost five-cents a pail and naturally was used with great sparsity. It proved costly as well as laborious to do any laundry. The water also had to be carried downstairs for disposal, adding to one's burden. Resultantly, the bulk of my parent's laundry was sent to Omaha, Nebr., by mail. On the homestead the precious water had to be carried a quarter of a mile, until the new house was built and several wells were drilled to locate water nearby. Not all the wells yielded water, making it a difficult task at best.

Family, as well as community togetherness, was much in evidence as we attended Sunday School and church, box socials, and other gatherings.

What sweet peace as we happened upon the scene of a cow and a new calf in a green meadow . . . the lowing of the cow as it licked its young, wobbly on new legs, but persistent in its efforts to stand alone.

Happy Hollow Gathering

The five-mile trip to Wood, to attend school, caused my parents much concern in the winter. Thoughtfully, they arranged for the teachers to look after us in the event that a bad storm might prevent Dad from coming to get us. On one occasion, my teacher did have to care for us. We walked a couple of blocks from school to the house where the teacher boarded. It was so cold that I froze my nose. They thawed me out with snowpacks while I watched the landlady give her pet canary a bath and clean the bird-cage. I slept that night with my teacher, while my sister, Doris, had a bed made for her on chairs grouped together. Dick stayed with a high-school buddy. During spring and early fall, he made the five-mile trek to and from school on his bicycle, daily. He later made a long trip on it, journeying to Linwood, Nebr.

I have had many narrow escapes. Once I fell from a raft into a lake. It left me badly frightened of water. Many years passed before I learned how to swim.

On another occasion, Mother sent Dad outdoors to find out why I was screaming so. It was fortunate that we always kept a hoe by the back door; for a rattlesnake was coiled up in front of me, ready to strike my face.

A few years later, when we lived on the farm, I escaped a freak mishap. Dad, Dick, Doris and I were coming home from Wood in the Model-T. Dad stopped at the top of a hill, in order that a barbed-wire gate could be closed. Dick got out to close it, but had difficulty. Dad applied the handbrake and proceeded to help him. Somehow the brake did not hold, and my sister and I soon became aware of the peculiar sensation of the car moving down the hill toward the creek. It seemed more that the hill was moving upward from under us. Dad ran to stop the car, but could not make it. The Model-T rocked into the creek, up the shallow bank and settled down again. It was fortunate the creek bed was dry.

When I glanced up at Doris, as Dad took her from the car, I cried and cried. She received a horrible bump and bruise on her nose. It swelled and turned blue so rapidly, I thought surely she would never be the same. Everyone wondered why I cried so when all I got was a chipped tooth. My fear for Doris upset me so, I could not explain. Dr. Bouza came and treated Doris' nose. Out of nowhere appeared a huge sack of corn candy. Some kind of sweet was provided each time one of us became ill. I was certainly happy to see my sister recover completely, with no ill effects. Later, an article appeared in the paper that Doris Kerlin had fallen from a swing and suffered a broken nose!

Dad's health would not permit him to withstand the farm work any longer, and on July 4, 1930, we moved to Linwood, Nebr. Dick had made the trip earlier in June; pedaling his bicycle all the way. We received word that he arrived safely and sunburned on his birthday, June 21st. My heart was reluctant to leave my beloved home, especially the swing that hung from the huge elm tree. Before we left, I sneaked the swing-board into the back seat of the car. Never did it occur to me that it would be possible to enjoy a swing in Nebraska!

Our arrival to Nebraska brought my mother's dread of snakes to the fore. She laughingly peeked under the porch of the house, and lo and behold! there just happened to be a rattler there! Seldom were they seen there.

Soon Doris and I were sporting boyish-bobs. Dick was worried sick that someone might see us, and he reacted in horror.

Dick, Doris and I each graduated from the Linwood High School. Dad was on the school board and was Justice of the Peace. He kept books at various places, raised a huge garden, and occasionally filled in at the Omaha postoffice.

We found our dear friends, the Rev. and Mrs. H. C. Van Valkenburgh at Arlington, Nebr., near Fremont. Rev. Van, as we always called him, officiated at my marriage, as he did at Mother and Dad's. He had, many years previously, baptized Dick.

I was married on October 5, 1940, staying always in Nebraska. My interests lie in home, family and church. Gene, 19, the eldest of my children, hopes to enter the ministry. He has my father's walk, short and rather quick. Virginia (Ginny) is 12 and interested in nursing as a career. Patty is 10 and a very happy child. Richard (Ricky) is 7 and all boy. Mary Erin is 4, all girl, with her Grandmother Kerlin's deep black eyes.

Dad went to his New Life on March 31, 1952. He had been failing for years and succumbed to lobar pneumonia.

Hodgkin's Disease, an incurable lymph-type cancer, claimed my mother's body on September 11, 1957. The spirits, love and kindnesses of my parents still live in the hearts of many. They established a Christian home, sharing play and work, joy and hardship; abiding in faith and love.

# My Homesteading Story

**By Mrs. Mary Shouldis**

On September 25, 1912, Mrs. McCrorey and I, with my five children, left Plattesburg in Clinton County, Mo. The children were Nina, Emma, Homer, Esther, and Raymond.

We were three days on our journey by train. We arrived in Winner on September 28 at about 4:00 o'clock. My husband, Charlie, had arranged for a room for us so we could stay in Winner that night. However, Mrs. McCrorey was expecting her husband to meet her in White River that evening, so she insisted on going to White River.

Bert Humphrey was hauling passengers so we came to White River with him. I remember that Bert broke a spoke of his wheel when crossing a creek and had to fix it before making the return trip. We got to White River and stayed at the Tomsik Hotel that night.

Charlie, and Joe McCrorey had come to Mellette County ahead of us, in August, to build our houses and get things ready.

Mr. McCrorey was there waiting for us. The next morning he hitched our white horses onto the lumber wagon and we started on our homeward trip.

Our destination was 14 miles west of White River, section 28 43-30.

We stopped at a lady homesteader's place near ours. She was Miss May Jinks and she invited us in for dinner; she had been looking for us. We had a good dinner with her and then we started on. We went to McCrorey's homestead, 15 miles farther west of Miss Jinks, because our house was not ready.

Only the frame of our house was built, so we stayed with McCroreys until October 8th and then went back to our own home. The floors were about two-thirds done and the doors and windows were not put in yet. The men worked hard to get it finished as much as possible before night fell. I remember that we laid a door across two chairs to make a bed for our oldest boy, Homer, to sleep on.

We fixed places for us all to sleep and then had supper. We had Charlie's hay camping outfit to use, as our household goods had not been delivered yet. We were a little short on some things — maybe one had a knife, one a spoon, and another one a fork, and we had to eat off of pie tins that night. Things seemed so strange, but we were homesteaders and got along fine.

We had brought with us five bushels of potatoes, a sack of flour, a sack of dried apples, and some fruit we had canned, so we got along O. K. while those supplies lasted.

One evening, Charlie and the children went to visit Mr. Grant, who lived a half-mile south of us. May Jinks was with my oldest daughter and me. We heard a strange, mournful sound outside by the window. I went to the door to look out. I saw what I thought at first was a very big dog. Later on, we decided it must have been a wolf. It scared us, but it did not try to hurt us.

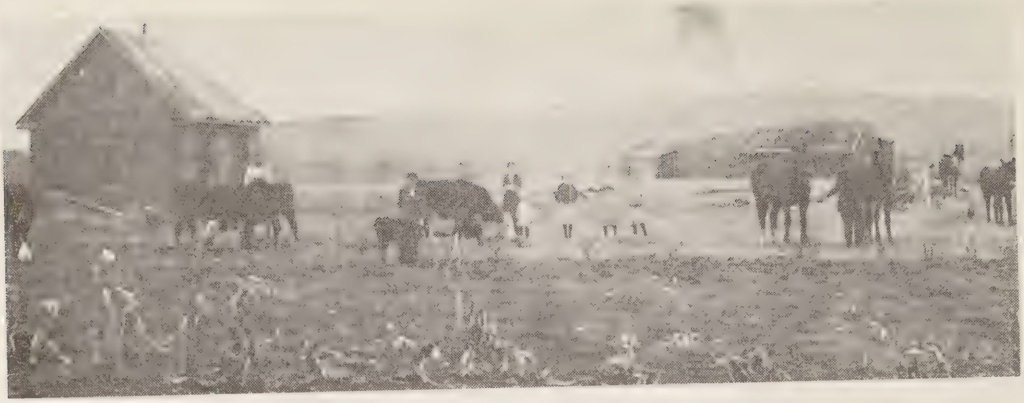
The weather was nice and warm and we did not need much fire which was a good thing because fuel was scarce for most of the homesteaders.

One day there was a man named Kusik from Stamford who drove into our place selling meat and chickens. He was enroute to White River. He asked me if I wanted to buy some meat so we bought a side of pork. We also bought a live chicken for our Thanksgiving dinner. We had no place to keep it so we shut it in the cellar. One day it got out and I thought our Thanksgiving dinner was gone. The children chased it and chased it until they caught it.

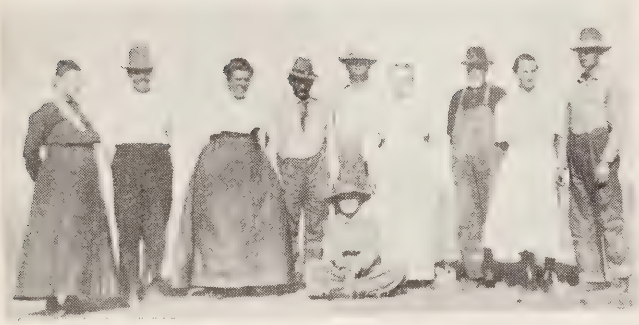
On November 30, 1912, after dinner was over, the children went for a walk and all was well. That night, a little before 12 o'clock, a new little girl came to our house to help us homestead. We called her Leola Mellette. She was the fourth White child born in organized Mellette County, they told us when we registered her birth.

Doctor Rhule homesteaded two miles from us and his wife taught school in White River. Charlie met him in White River one day and asked him to be on hand if we needed him. So for about two weeks he stayed out on his homestead so as to be handy. That night, Charlie walked to Mrs. Grant's place and asked her to come over, then walked to Mrs. Witherow's asking her to come, then walked two and a half miles more to the doctor's homestead and back home. He was tired when he got home, but all went well with us. I remember that it snowed a little that night after midnight.

Another trying time was in 1913 when we had our first bad blizzard on March 13. It started with a driz-

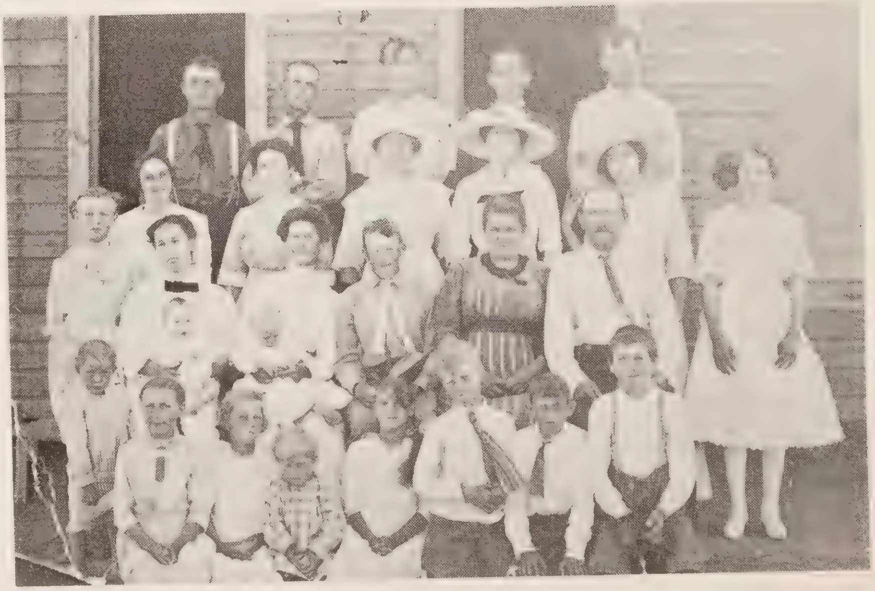


Shouldis Homestead, 1912



Mr. and Mrs. Sheldon Findley, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Schwisow, Mr. and Mrs. E. J. King, Louie King, Mrs. Roy King (seated), Mr. and Mrs. Roy Findley (Emma).

Texsam P. O. in later years



**Texsam Sunday School, June 1913.** Pictured are Charley Denning, Sam Texter, Sr., Ted Race, Sam Texter, Jr., Iles Huey, Nina Shouldis, May Jinks, Margaret Bramer, Ella Bramer, Miss Rose, Emma Shouldis, Florence Grant, Raymond Shouldis, Mary Shouldis, Leola Shouldis, Mrs. Van Valkenburgh and baby, Rev. Van Valkenburgh, Mr. and Mrs. Schwisow. Children are Leodina Pastine, Louise, Paul and Rollin Van Valkenburgh, Esther and Homer Shouldis and Fred Pastine.

zle. It rained in the evening and then turned into a snowstorm. It snowed for two days and two nights. Then that next morning after the storm, the sun came out so bright and nice that we felt as if God's presence was with us and we were safe, even though we were shut in with snow piled up above our door.

We looked out through a part of the window that wasn't covered and saw three horseback riders coming up the draw with shovels. The men were Iles Huey, Alva Duncan, and Elmer Shouldis. They shoveled us out; then went over to May Jinks shack and shoveled her out.

The weather had been so nice before the storm that we were not prepared for a blizzard. It caught us low on wood and water. We did not have too much of a variety to eat but did not go hungry. I cooked a big kettle of beans on the heating stove to save fuel and they were the main food we had to eat. We had plenty of bread baked, but the children still remember that we had beans for breakfast that morning. That was unusual so they didn't forget it.

Early in the storm, we were running short of wood. Homer got out and brought in the saw, saw buck, and some chunks of wood. During the storm he sawed them up in the kitchen to burn in the heater. We didn't even use the cook stove, but stayed in the living room near the heater.

There was a snowdrift in the house that drifted in around the window, which came up half as high as the window. That blizzard was a great experience. We all came through it in fine shape. That blizzard was something I would rather remember than live through again.

In March 1913, we dug a well in our yard not far from the house and it was such good water. One day in the spring of 1913, Edgar Witherow and our boy, Homer, were out hunting. They noticed a horse track in the frozen ground. The tracks were deep and full of ice. The boys came hurrying home and told us they had found water. Mr. Witherow and Charlie went out dug down and tested for water. They found a spring of water about eight feet down. Later, they dug wells and had a wonderful watering place.

When our 14 months were up, we took a vote around the table one morning. The question was: "Who wants to go back to Missouri to live, and who wants to stay here?" We all said, "Stay here!" I remember I said that we couldn't leave our cows now because we were getting lots of milk and had our own cream and butter.

Then we started plowing and breaking up more sod. In 1914, we raised a good crop of corn and watermelons. Everything grew well; we had big beets, potatoes, and all kinds of vegetables.

On July 9, 1915, Jim Ed was born. That made us seven children.

On December 5, 1915, we celebrated our twentieth wedding anniversary. Many friends from White River and the surrounding neighborhood came to our place. There were around 60 people there. Our house was small, but it was such a nice warm day that most of the men stayed outside. After dinner was over and the dishes washed, we all visited a while. Then the people went home after wishing us many more happy anniversaries.

I believe it was in 1919 that lightning struck our house. It set the house on fire, upset the cookstove, and also killed one of Homer's coyote hounds. That was an exciting time we had and we were all scared badly.

I remember another bad storm. We had a windstorm and later, rain. This wind blew our old shack away. I had my little chickens under a wagon box which we had turned upside down for their shelter. The wind blew it over the fence into the garden. It left chickens hanging on the wire fence and we found them lying dead all over the yard. We gathered a basket, about two-thirds full, of dead chickens.

Another year an electric storm came up in the night and killed three head of horses for us. It seemed like there was something on our place that attracted lightning.

The Texsam Post Office had been in Ida Witherow's house since May 1913. When they went to California to spend the winter, the Post Office was turned over to me on March 22, 1921. The mail was carried by Frank Bechtold, Roy Raffensperger, and B. A. Olson. The Texsam Post Office was officially discontinued on July 31, 1934.

As time went on, another girl was born to us, in 1921. We called her Juanita May. That made eight children in our family. Grandpa Shouldis also lived with us 30 years.

Our boy, Homer Shouldis, died during the influenza epidemic.

We lived on the place until 1940, when Charlie passed on. Then I went to live with my daughter, Esther, and Perry Hitchings.

On March 19, 1962, I was 87 years old. I still make my home with Perry and Esther in White River, and enjoy visiting with my friends about the days out in Texsam neighborhood.

# The Karl Sorensen Story

**By Winifred Reutter**

Information for this short story was given to me from Andy Sorensen and his sister, Mathilda Berges.

Mr. and Mrs. Karl Sorensen arrived on their Mellette County homestead on May 13, 1913. Their homestead was located on NW 24 41-28. Their son, Andy, who was born on the homestead, still lives there with his wife. three daughters, and a son.

Sorensens came from Lake Andes, S. D., hauling their belongings in a lumber wagon. They had three horses, three cows, and three children at that time.

The first night after their arrival, Mr. Sorensen staked out his horses, but one broke loose. It started back east, probably heading for Lake Andes, but they caught up with it at the Frank Jarboe place and that is how they met their first neighbor.

Mr. and Mrs. Karl Sorensen and three oldest children, William, Mathilda and Elizabeth.

They lived first in a tent, then in a one-room homestead shack, and built a house in 1925.

The children who came with them were Matilda, Elizabeth, and William. Marie and Andy were born later on the homestead.

Mrs. Sorensen baked and washed for the bachelor homesteaders in the neighborhood. The three older children attended the first Happy Hollow School.

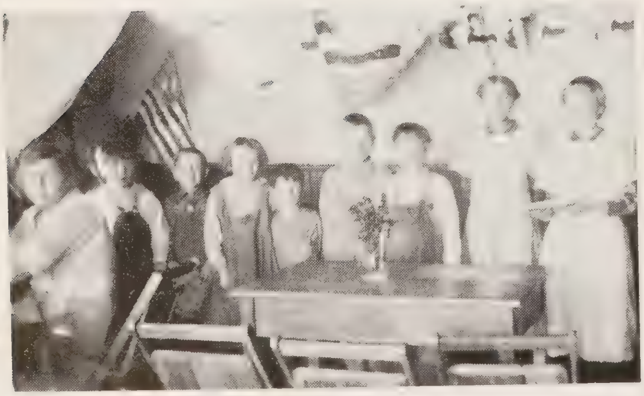
Sorensens dug a well as their first project. Some neighbors helped dig it in one afternoon. They dug down about eight feet deep and hit good water. This well is still in use, which is quite remarkable in this dry country.

Mr. Sorensen passed away in 1949 and Mrs. Sorensen in 1954.

Ready to leave for the homestead in Mellette County.

Threshing at home, Mellette County, 1919

Sorensens' wagon going west past a town on their way to Mellette County.



Happy Hollow School, 1912. Two girls at right are Sorensens.

Sorensens ready for winter on the homestead.

# Things I Remember of Homestead Days

**By Mrs. Florence Starkjohann As Told to Blanche Kaufman**

If I remember right, my folks came to White River in 1911. My father, John Patnoe, helped build some of the first buildings in White River. One of them was the Tomsik Hotel, another was a pool hall that Mullins owned, I believe. I think it was in the back, or side, of this pool hall that my folks ran a cafe for a few years. They later had a restaurant north of where the drug store now is.

Those were very hard years for my parents. In 1912, two of my brothers, Alfred, age four, and Irvin, age six, and a sister, Thelma, age two, all died of diphtheria within two weeks. They are buried in the old cemetery up on the hill west of the river. I've often wondered how my poor mother lived through such trying times.

In 1917, my oldest brother, Ernest, homesteaded on some land south of old Cedarbutte. I was eight years old then and can remember when we put all of our belongings into a lumber wagon and started out for our new home, as my folks moved out there with him. We stopped at Bert Butterfield's to rest and Mrs. Butterfield fed us. I can remember how hungry I was, but the only item of the meal I can remember was beet pickles.

Ernest's homestead was three or four miles west of Butterfield's, in the Badlands. The Nels Berklands, Don Brodies, Emil Romms, and others were our neighbors to the east. We were about four miles south of the old Cedarbutte Store, run by Jess Beckwith. What a treat it was to get to go there once or twice a month. You could really get a big bag of candy for a nickel. In fact, a nickel then, looked nearly as big as a dollar seems now and bought nearly as much.

Another thing I remember is trying to keep warm in the shacks that we and all the other homesteaders had for houses. Dad would start cutting wood early in the fall until he had a pile as big as the house. It kept one busy putting wood into the heating stove and carrying out the ashes. We would keep turning first one side and then the other to the heat to try to keep warm.

Dad and the boys had 30 or 40 head of horses and most of them were not broke. From the time I was 10 years old, it was my job to bring in the work horses and milk cows. There were very few fences then and trying to find 20 to 30 cows in the Badlands and timber was quite a job. I often killed from one to four rattlesnakes, also, while rounding up the cattle.

I remember getting up at 4:00 A. M., packing a picnic lunch, getting into the old lumber wagon, picking up one or two of the neighbors, and all going to White River to attend Frontier Days. We would stay all day, getting home at dawn the next morning.

The homesteaders visited each other often, sometimes playing cards or dancing until the wee hours of the morning. I believe people really enjoyed their neighbors more in those days because they didn't have cars to take them so far away from home.

We planted acres of navy beans in sod. Once when we were pulling them and stacking them in piles to dry so we could thresh them out later on, we found several snakes under the sods.

It seemed that we usually had a good large garden, even without any irrigation. We always raised a lot of watermelons, squash, pumpkins and cucumbers. Dad always broke out a few extra furrows each year for vine crops, when he plowed the old garden, so our garden kept getting bigger and bigger every year.

# Life in Mellette County From 1912 to 1934

**By Mrs. John Steiner**

Three months after we were married, my husband, John Steiner, and I moved to Mellette County to start our married life on a homestead, in August of 1912. We came from Pawnee County, Nebr., where we had lived since childhood.

A friend of John's, John O'Donnel, went with the freight car that carried our stock (four horses and a few chickens), wagon, buggy, grain and furniture.

John and I went on the train by way of Sioux City, Iowa. There in the depot, I saw the first Indians I had ever seen. Instead of sitting on the benches, they sat on the floor or were lying on the floor on blankets. This seemed very odd to me at that time. I had never given much thought to their ways of living before, only what I had read when I went to school. Later, I learned that they weren't at all bad to get along with.

We arrived in Murdo, S. D., about August 28 or 29, and while there John bought the lumber for our house which was to be 20 x 20 feet, a story and a half, with two windows, one on either end. Gustave Kositzky had the lumber yard at that time and one of his boys hauled the lumber out to where we were to build our new home. John hired a car without a top to take us out to the homestead. It was a very hot, windy day and one couldn't have kept a hat on if he had wanted to. My face really got a good sunburn on the way out. Of course, when we got there, there was no place to stay — only the open prairie.

L. P. Lowen, wife, two girls, and an uncle of Mrs. Lowen, had moved out on the land just south of our place earlier, and they had built a two-room house, a small barn, and had dug a well. We felt very fortunate that they let us sleep in their barn until our house was built up enough to have a roof on; then we stayed there at our own home.

Mr. Lowen stayed in St. Paul, Minn., to work and the rest of the family just lived long enough in Mellette County to prove up on the land, then they left.

John and his friend dug a well as soon as they could and we were lucky to get plenty of good soft water at about 14 feet. It was in a draw a distance from where we built the house. It may still be there, but has no pump on it as someone took it after we left.

Some of the neighbors who came out to their homesteads before we did were Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Wil-

**First Steiner Shack. Mr. and Mrs. Steiner and Richard, 1913.**

son and three children, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Brooks and four children, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Ray and small son, Charles, Mr. Ray's mother and his sister, Emma, George Bailey, Cody Sinning; Mr. and Mrs. Art Zickrick and small son lived several miles northeast. The Jones boys, Bob and Dick, of the bank at White River, had a place about a half mile east of the northeast corner of our place, and a Mr. John Crabtree, Mrs. Springer and her two grown boys, George and Harry, lived there. Three years later, John's brother-in-law, Chris Wolf, and wife, Rose, bought that place and they with their eight children moved onto it.

Mr. Wilson helped build most of our house, also the barn and small chicken house. He was very good at carpenter work and we were very thankful for his help, since John had inquired at Murdo for someone to help with the carpenter work. As the work progressed on our buildings, our things arrived in Murdo by freight, and were brought out to the homestead.

We had our first snow about September 14 that year. It was enough to cover the ground good.

As for our horses, we were lucky to have taken some grain along for them. There wasn't any hay near and no fences to keep the horses home. John finally located some tall slough-grass several miles to the southeast of us. He cut it and hauled it home, but it wasn't very good feed. There were quite a lot of range cattle running on the prairies at that time so the buffalo grass and other grasses were grazed very short.

People got their mail in boxes along the White River to Westover road, about four miles west of us across country, or at Westover. We made bags with our names on them and left them for the mail to be put into.

On the first Thanksgiving, we were asked to join some homesteaders southwest of us, probably four or five miles across country, but the weather wasn't very good and we didn't go. There was a Miss Cristy, Miss Russell and three or four other homesteaders living in that neighborhood. Shorty Scheurer lived near there for several years.

We had a team of horses and a light buggy with a top for our means of transportation the first years. Sometimes we drove one horse single on the buggy. Mr. and Mrs. Wilson also had a pony they drove single, so Mrs. Wilson, the children and I, often went to Westover to get the mail with their horse or ours.

Once when Mrs. Wilson, the children and I went after the mail, we saw a couple of black wolves in the hills up east from the road along the river. A year or two later, a man, Mr. Moon and daughter, moved in northwest of us. He had a team of mares that had colts about the same age and size. Wolves killed both colts and hamstrung them one night.

Later in the fall or next spring, more homesteaders came: Will McBride, Bert Pringle, Mr. and Mrs. Dan Vogel and four children moved in southeast of us, and Mr. and Mrs. James Paleck and Elda, east of us.

Mr. and Mrs. Will Smith and small boy lived farther south and Cody Sinning was farther south yet. Mr. and Mrs. Lafe Ingles, Mr. McCarthy, and Mr. and Mrs. Verne LaTourelle and small boy all lived to the north of us.

Matt Gillen's homestead was four or five miles east and south, also Mr. and Mrs. Harm Jans and others. Some came and some left again. Some stayed just long enough to put in what time they had to, to prove up on their land, then left.

**Matt Gillen's homestead. Matt with Will McBride.**

Our oldest boy, Richard, was born March 24, 1913. He was one of the first White babies, if not the first, born in the county after it opened up for homesteading. We didn't have very much snow through the first winter, but we had a big snowstorm just a while before he was born. The low places were all filled with snow, level with the hilltops and no roads could be followed. One of the neighbors, a young fellow, drove our team and buggy to Westover, following the ridges as much as he could, to meet Dr. Kimble and bring him on back to our place, which was about nine miles or more. They got back late and we were very glad to have had Mrs. Wilson with us at that time.

The Harry Atwood family came to the county about that time. They lived near Cody Sinning. Their oldest boy, Woodrow, was born on Christmas Day, 1912, but

**Bert Pringle's homestead. Will McBride, Bert Pringle, John Steiner and Richard.**

I think that Mrs. Atwood did not come out there until a few months after he was born. I may be mistaken.

When John and Mr. Wilson went to Murdo for coal the first winter, I usually stayed with Mrs. Wilson and the children. I wasn't very brave about staying alone and when I did, at first, I usually stayed up as long as I could stay awake, but with the light out.

The Brooks family built a larger house later and then moved their one-room homestead up to the other house. Later, the Brooks family left and Mr. and Mrs. Daugherty moved onto their place.

Mr. and Mrs. Wilson left the second fall because Emily, the oldest child, was old enough to go to school. They came back again later and stayed until 1934.

We and the LaTourelles spent our second Thanksgiving at Frank McGrath's at Westover. He said he would get a turkey if we would come, so we took some things and went to his house. When we got there, all he had been able to get was an old hen, and I do mean OLD! We cooked it about three-fourths of the day and it was still tough.

**Back row** (left to right): Mr. Vogel, Will McBride, Bert Pringle, Mr. Bailey, Steiner, Brooks and Paleck. **Next row:** McBride's mother, Mrs. Steiner and Richard, Mrs. Vogel and baby, Mrs. Paleck and Mrs. Brooks; two Vogel boys, Lucile and Orfa Brooks and Elda Paleck (1914).

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Kimball bought the place that Vogels had and they with their five children moved onto it in the fall of 1914. Three of their children were ready for school and others in the neighborhood were school age the next year. With seven or more children in the community needing a school, the men of the neighborhood built a school house. This was the first school house and was called the Paleck School because it was built on Mr. and Mrs. Paleck's place. They had some trouble getting a teacher for the full term that first year. Selby Gallagher taught for a while, then Theron Broadboll until Christmas, and I think that Elmer Zickrick finished the term. After the first year, they usually got a teacher for the full term.

Rev. and Mrs. Harm Jans started our first Sunday School and it was kept going for several years. They left for a while but came back later. Mr. Daugherty helped with the Sunday School for a while, and Rev. and Mrs. Jans helped again when they came back.

The first good wheat crops we had were in 1915 and 1916, and the grass was very good also. This caused many prairie fires — some in the daytime and some started at night. In the fall of 1916, one could look out almost any time of the night and see a prairie fire or fires some place near, or far off in the distance. There wasn't much corn raised at that time.

John bought the first threshing machine in that part of the country in 1915 and he threshed for many people in our neighborhood, Happy Hollow, and also near White River, later.

After those years, there was someone on each section of land that was to be homesteaded, but later some began to leave again. It always took time to get the sod plowed, ready to plant, and have a crop.

There weren't any roads in any part of the county except wagon trails in different places. Some, where the freighters hauled lumber or other things to Wood from Murdo, were more traveled than others. This freighters' trail from Westover to Wood went through our place and nearby our house. The Indians used this trail a good deal, too, and also often stopped by our well for water.

The road from Westover to White River along the Little White River wasn't a very good road either. John helped grade that road with his four horses. Later, as the people moved in on their places, and fences were put in on the section lines, the roads were made where they sould be. Much later, John, with the help of Lonnie Tucker, and another man, part-time, graded the main road through our neighborhood and on toward Wood with the county caterpillar and blade.

The first rodeo celebration we went to was in 1913, or maybe 1914. It was held near Little White River and not too far from the town of White River. We went with the Wilson family in what was called an "Indian wagon." It was pulled by Wilson's small horse and our horse, which was about four hands taller than theirs. It must have been a funny sight! We also went many times in later years when it was called "Frontier Days" and held at White River.

Of course, our recreation was mostly of our own making. I remember at one time, a young fellow, Purcell, who moved into the community north of us, was always bragging about how he could run. John was quite a foot-racer, too. So Mr. McBride got a stop-watch and they practiced until they figured John could outrun the fellow. Then they challenged him to a race. Yes, that's right—John won!

Baseball was another favorite sport. John and Mr. Wilson were ardent fans, so we would load our families into the Indian wagon pulled by a team and go clear to Happy Hollow so they could play ball.

Sometimes we went to the Little Badlands for a picnic. At one place, there were bones and teeth in the hard clay formation at the top of the higher knolls.

There was another homesteading incident I haven't mentioned yet. It happened after a heavy snow in the winter during one of the earlier years. A lady and her boy (she may have had smaller children, too) lived a few miles east and north from the Westover bridge. I cannot recall her name now, but they lived in a house with a lean-to built onto it. The roof of the lean-to caved in from the weight of the heavy snow. She was there alone while her husband was away working. It frightened her so badly that her hair turned white overnight. The boy was school age and he rode horseback across the prairie, to where the old Kendall place was, to go to school. It got so foggy and dark one evening as he came home from school that he couldn't find his way home so he stayed out on the prairie all night. He survived this ordeal very well.

That was after the high, Government barbed wire fence had been taken out. This fence ran from north of the Kendall place and northeast to the Big White River. There was a gate near Kendall's and Mr. Kendall took care of keeping it locked. Mellette County was an Indian reservation (Rosebud) and Mr. Kendall would open it for freighters or other people to go through.

A family named Poore moved close to where the lady (whose hair turned white overnight), lived. And this family had a small store there for a while in 1913.

About 1913, Cody Sinning got the Post Office at his place, which was about four miles south from our homestead, so we didn't have to go to Westover any more for the mail. It had been about nine miles to Westover.

In the summer of 1927, we had a very bad wind storm or twister. It picked up our barn, which was quite large, also the granary and carried them through the air several hundred feet from where they were located then dropped them all scattered out in pieces. Some pieces were blown about a quarter of a mile from the main part of the buildings. John and the boys (by this time we had all our family of six children, four boys and two girls) stood at the windows and held pillows against them to keep them from being blown out. We also braced the doors to keep them shut.

**Steiner Family, 1960**

We lived in Mellette County 22 years. We left in June of 1934 after the grasshoppers and drouth had been so bad the year before. They were bad the year we left too, and the crops weren't good either. I really hated to leave the many friends I had known and it had been home for a long time.

John and I were back there for a short visit in 1949. People lived farther apart in the country as each farm had more land but the country roads hadn't changed much. A different and good road had been made north from White River.

A few of the people we knew still lived in the neighborhood. Some that had moved in later or had grown up there, some of the homesteaders had moved to town. I think Cody Sinning is the only homesteader of 1912 that stayed on his homestead all through the years.

Many of the old timers have passed on, through the years, either there or after they moved away, including my husband, John, in October 1960.

I'd like to go back to see many that I knew, but to live there—I wouldn't want to again.

God's blessing to all those that have stayed and that are still there.

(Memo: Mrs. John Steiner passed away in August 1961. We do appreciate her efforts in writing and sending us her story so we would have it for this book and can preserve it now for her friends and children. W. R.)

# History of Charley and Minnie Sharp

**By Lois Stone**

Charley and Minnie Sharp homesteaded in Mellette County in 1913, ten miles west and four miles south of White River, S. D.

Charley was born in Butler County, Nebr., Feb. 20, 1881, moving with his parents to Keya Paha County, Nebr., where he spent his boyhood. When he was a young man he went to Bonesteel, S. D.

Minnie Romm was born April 19, 1886, at Creighton, Nebr., and later moved with her family to the Bonesteel vicinity.

In 1908, Charley and Minnie were married at Fairfax, S. D. To this union six children were born.

The many years on the homestead were hard ones at first. In plowing up the land with a team of horses and a plow the first year, over a hundred rattlesnakes were found and killed.

The house was a one-room, tar-papered frame shack. It was papered inside with old papers and magazines, to help keep out the cold in winter and the heat during the summer. One July day, during a severe hail storm, the knots were knocked out of the boards and the house leaked like a sieve. In another storm, on a different occasion, all the buildings but the house were blown away. The family went to the cellar for shelter during these storms. The cellar was also used in the early days as a place to keep milk and butter, and to store potatoes, vegetables and canned goods for winter use.

The first few years, the men of the neighborhood followed the harvesting crews up into North Dakota to earn money for the winter supplies. The women and children sometimes stayed with each other while the men were gone. After a few years, they had their own grain to harvest. So they would haul wagon loads of grain, with six head of horses hitched to the wagon, to Murdo, S. D. In exchange for the money for the grain they obtained flour, sugar, coal and other supplies for the winter. These trips took three or four days. Roads were winding trails, and, as there were no bridges they would have to ford the rivers.

The homestead was located near the old Black Pine trail, and it was a haven for travelers and no one was ever turned away. We never knew how many we would have at the table for the next meal or for a nights lodging.

One night a cry for help was heard. A young man's horse had fallen with him and broken the fellow's leg. He was brought into the house and his leg set, then he was cared for until he was well enough to continue on his way.

When the dry season approached each year there was always the danger of prairie fire. When one got started it might burn for days, perhaps clear to the White River unless fire fighters put it out. Always a fire guard of several furrows, was plowed around the buildings, which would usually save the buildings if the wind wasn't too strong.

Education was quite a problem as schools were far apart so few pupils went to school during the winter months.

Pioneer entertainment was usually a dance, card game or just a party at each other's houses. Everyone took cake or sandwiches for lunch. For music, the community bought a phonograph. These affairs usually lasted from dark till daylight, as everyone went with team and wagon or on horseback, so quite a bit of time was spent on the road.

At home, as soon as the supper was over and dishes done, the family would gather around the kitchen stove, eating popcorn and apples, singing songs, reading or just talking.

Two special occasions we always looked forward to were the Community picnic on the Fourth of July and the White River Frontier Days.

Minnie's brothers, John and Amil Romm, also lived in Mellette County for many years; Amil near Cedarbutte and John was two miles west of Minnie's. Amil passed away September 3, 1929, and John now lives at Astoria, Ore., where he operates a motel and cafe.

Charley and Minnie lived on their homestead for 25 years, raising their family there. One daughter, Isabel, died at birth. A son, Lester, passed away in 1953; his widow and five children live in Denver, Colo. Charles lives in Rapid City, S. D. Lois Stone, with her husband live at Rapid City, S. D. Dwight, wife and three children live at Long Valley, S. D. Violet Marlow, husband and two sons live at Kadoka, S. D. Eva Holcomb, husband and three children live at Rufus, Ore. There are 18 grandchildren and 18 great grandchildren.

In 1934, Charley Sharp was hurt while working on a dam and passed away following surgery at Pierre, S. D. Minnie stayed on the place a couple years, then moved to White River where she lived for several years before moving to Fort Morgan, Colo. There she passed away in 1951, after a short illness.

# The Bud Stromer Story

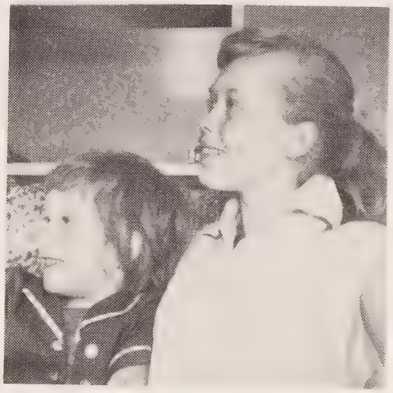
**By Donna Stromer**

We, Herman (Bud) Stromer and Donna Faye Nielsen, were married on May 17, 1944, at White River, S. D. From then on until the fall of 1945 we lived on the Wm. Jensen ranch where Bud was employed.

In October of 1945, we started ranching on what is known as the D. L. McLane place. This is located about 13 miles north of White River on the Cottonwood Creek and about one-half mile from the Big White River. On June 7, 1946, our daughter, Betty, was born.

We have a vivid memory of being in the blizzard of 1949. We were snowed in for six weeks but came through with no loss of cattle. However, I found out how hard it was to cook without fresh supplies. The only person we saw during this time was Don Hight who rode across the river on horseback.

**Bud, Donna Faye and Betty**



**Betty and Candy Jo**

Next, we moved to a place of Wm. Jensen's, known as the old Kell place, in the spring of 1950. Again, the thing I remember most about that place, was a bad blizzard. Many lives and cattle were lost. Bud was marooned in White River for three days. He had gone there to get some medicine for Betty who had a high

**The Bud Stromer Ranch, 1961**

fever. In the meantime, she broke out with the measles and was fine by the time he got back. Wm. Jensen had to meet him with the caterpillar and dozer to help open the road. Again we were lucky and came through without any livestock loss.

In the summer of 1952, we bought a quarter of land for $5,000.00 from Milton Mueller. This is about three miles north of White River on the south side of the Little White River. Highway 83 has been built east of our buildings since we moved there. At one time there had been a set of buildings closer to the river, but most of them washed away in a flood during the spring of 1942. We built a modern home on this land and Betty entered the first grade of school at White River. October 16, 1953, our second daughter, Candy Jo, was born.

Bud and I have lived all of our lives in Mellette County and we still like the ranch life.

# Our Life in Mellette County

### By Mrs. C. C. Swift

First I must state that we do not consider ourselves pioneers in Mellette County. If we had moved into the county ten years earlier I would have felt that I had a right to a place in this book. I was invited to take part in this collection of stories through the Round Robin group and so I am sending in my story.

I, Mary Swift, came into Mellette County for the first time in the fall of 1915, as a teacher in the primary department of the White River schools. Mary Owens was my name at that time.

The school was a two-story frame building, containing four class rooms. One of the upper rooms was used as a gymnasium those first years. There were three teachers. The upper classes, seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth, were taught by Noah Gerig. Ralph Hutchinson taught the intermediate grades, fourth, fifth and sixth. I had the primary department, first, second and third grades.

Mr. Gerig was homesteading out in Happy Hollow and part of the time he rode a motorcycle, but mostly he either rode or drove a horse. Mr. Hutchinson also was a homesteader whose claim was north of town. I stayed at the F. I. Terpin home in White River. The F. I. Terpins moved to White River early in 1915.

The school house had a steam heating system, but there was no running water and facilities were very old fashioned. Members of the school board at that time were Guy Hutchinson, C. F. Manson and Frank Terpin. The county superintendent of schools was Tom Green.

Residents of White River and surrounding countryside were very public spirited at that time. They were proud of their school, their town and their court-house. There was such a feeling of cooperation and unity, each working for the good of all.

There were no church buildings in White River at that time. There was a Catholic church on the hill west of the river, which served both Indians and White. A homesteader, Rev. Van Valkenburgh, organized a Sunday school and held services in the City Hall. Then in 1917 a Methodist church was organized and building plans were started. Reverend Richards was the first minister. The building was completed and dedicated in June 1919. Until that time the Methodist people held Sunday School and services in the school house.

Then the United States entered the First World War in April 1916. The settlers in Mellette County were very patriotic. They supported the cause in every way, organizing a Red Cross relief chapter, donating to benefit auctions, sewing for hospitals and knitting for our troops. It was all so satisfying and interesting, working together and such a feeling of comradeship. When a group of Mellette County boys were called to report for military duty they would be given a farewell reception and the whole county mourned when the body of our first casualty was brought home for burial. He was Guy Bruce.

Some of the business places in White River were Spears Store, Hollands Store, O'Reilley Drug Store, Chris Anders Garage and Tomsiks Blacksmith Shop, also the Jones Hotel and two banks—one was operated by Robert Jones and the other by Eric Brodball with B. A. Olson, cashier.

Such was Mellette County as I knew it from September 1915 until June 1918.

Then in the spring of 1922 I came back again to Mellette County with my husband, Charles C. Swift. He hauled our possessions from Gregory County, near Bonesteel, with a team and wagon. He made two trips in the fall of 1921 and stored machinery, etc., at my brother's home in the Paleck neighborhood. My parents, the E. R. Owens, had bought that place in 1921 and moved there with my brother, Robert Owens, who was married later in the year. Our stock was shipped to Winner by train with Van Strait's stock. There Charles met him and helped drive them out from Winner.

We bought a quarter section of Indian land about three miles southeast of Westover. On this place our two sons were born, Raleigh in the fall of 1922, and Byron in November 1928.

Westover was a Post Office and store, north of the Big White River bridge and on the Jones County side. We were on the south side and were the first settlers

**Mary's parents, Mr. and Mrs. E. R. Owens, when they lived in White River.**

Home of Charles Swift, in north Mellette County near Westover, 1922-1935.

Home of Alex Bordeaux, along Little White River west of town, about 1917.

up on this flat, although the Sterners owned a homestead on the hill south of the flats. Irwin Sterner and wife later lived on and improved this place.

Our place was about 13 miles from Murdo and Charles hauled the material for our buildings from there with a team.

Henry Leusman owned a place on the river bottom north of the flat and brought his bride (Clara Wolf) there to be our neighbor in 1922. The next year, in the spring of 1923, Robert Jones and family bought land and moved into the neighborhood, also Eddie Peterson, who was married that summer. Then it was about in the fall of 1923 that the Harrisons, Marion Harrison and his sons Emmet and Francis, moved their families onto the flats. And I believe it was early in 1924 that my uncle, W. W. Jones, and family came out from Nebraska and leased land near us. They were followed in 1925 or 1926 by the Hill and Dyson families and so our neighborhood was settled and named Prosperity Flat. I believe the Prosperity School was built in 1926. We were proud of our neighborhood and our school. I think Ida King was our first teacher.

We did not consider that those were hard years. The hard times came with the grasshoppers and the dust storms in 1932 through 1935. We could not see our way clear to stay, so sold and went to Oregon in 1935.

# In Memory of Mr. and Mrs. Dave Hougham

**By Mrs. Otis (Hazel) Tarr**

My parents, Mr. and Mrs. Dave Hougham, and my brother, Theodore, came to Mellette County May 1, 1919. They came from their homestead in Tripp County, near Sully Flats, to their ranch three miles north of Norris that they had bought in the fall of 1918.

Theodore and a neighbor boy, Leo Harmon, drove over 100 head of cattle out. They had 20 head of horses for pulling wagons and riding. It took them two weeks. They had a hayrack, supplies, oil stove, tent for sleeping in, also a place fixed in which to put new born calves. They also hauled some hay.

While they were on the road they had three days of steady rain. The tent, that was over half of the rack, started to leak through. The bedding got wet so that the boys would almost as soon ride night-herd as to go to bed.

Bacon, eggs, breakfast food and coffee were their diet. They roped a different cow, that was giving milk, every day to get their milk supply.

One time when they lit up the oil stove, they found out some of the oil had splashed over, from the jolting of the wagon, so the first thing they knew they had a fire started which caused some excitement for a while.

They lost a few cows due to the hard winter just passed and the rough trip.

There was nothing but trails to follow, but that was the way of life in those days. Can you imagine our youngsters doing that in 1961? If you were not able to ride horseback, you never got very far from home.

It was very lonesome for my mother. She spent her spare time piecing quilts, 13 in all, to pass the cold winter months.

Small tar-paper covered shacks were very common. But there was always plenty of room for any weary travelers passing through.

Broncho riding was a favorite event on the Dave Hougham ranch in those days. There was always someone who would ride 'em out or at least tried hard to.

One winter, I remember, we burned corn to keep warm when we had run out of other fuel. We lived in an old house on the side of a hill. It was badly in need of repair and while working on the floor one day we spied a rattlesnake crawling along the wall. Otis grabbed a stove poker and killed the rattler. We slept

Dave Hougham with a rattlesnake and bullsnake he'd just killed.

in the house that night with our eyes open! On the same place, we found a big rattler near the house and before we got it killed, we spied another close by, coiled and ready for action.

Each family had problems to cope with and they had to act without hesitation. For instance, one of our twin boys was just tall enough to run into the corner of the table and split his ear. Luckily I had some white silk thread on hand. I took several stitches in his ear. He got along fine but he still carries the scar. I now often wonder how we got along without a doctor and still lived to be here to tell about our early Mellette County days.

We drove a very small team of mules hitched to a two wheel trailer. Our friends often told us we traveled as fast as a Model T Ford.

One time when I was visiting my mother we heard the dog barking. He was really excited so we both went out to see what he had. We saw two of the largest snakes either of us had ever seen. Mother sent me back to the house for a gun. I grabbed an automatic, which neither of us knew how to shoot. Well, to make a long story short, it was a good thing we didn't get the gun off safety for it would have shot a full round before stopping. What we had thought were rattlesnakes turned out to be two of the biggest bullsnakes we had ever seen. Mother and I had many laughs years later about our big snake hunt.

The first Norris Cafe was operated by my sister and her husband in 1922. The next owners were Mr. and Mrs. Harry Spragg.

I well remember the town of Norris. In the center of main street, no cars parked there then, but there was plenty of room for teams and saddle horses.

My brother, Theodore, and others used to freight from Belvidere to Norris and other towns, with four to six head of horses. One morning before starting out, homeward bound, they brewed some coffee and put it in a gallon can. During the trip they got cold and decided to enjoy the coffee. Somehow the coffee had got spilled. So they climbed back on their loads, not saying a word to each other, and continued their cold journey.

In those days of no fences we would keep a light in a window during stormy nights to help anyone lost in the storm find their way.

If my parents were alive today, I'm sure they could give a very interesting story of the early days in Mellette County. I was not living here before 1929 but I have tried to give a few items in memory of my parents, Mr. and Mrs. Dave Hougham.

(Mr. Otis Tarr passed away after a brief illness May 25, 1961, at the hospital in Pierre. Our sympathy to the family. W. R.)

# A Pioneer Story

**By Mrs. Ida Thorstenson**

What is a pioneer story but one telling of hardships, faith and courage. In the case of my parents, Christian and Christine Andersen, it was indeed courage. It took great courage for two people who had lived in the city to homestead on the South Dakota prairies.

My parents came to the United States from Copenhagen, Denmark, in February 1910. My father had brothers in the Eastern United States and cousins in South Dakota.

How eager my brother, who was 10 years old, and I, aged 8, looked forward to an ocean voyage. It turned out to be miserable for my brother as he was very seasick on the whole trip, but I had a wonderful time. We especially enjoyed our stop in Christiansan, Norway. It is now Oslo. Our ship was forced to go there for repairs after another vessel rammed us in a fog. Our parents took us sightseeing a whole day and that was the last fun my brother had until we landed in the U. S. A.

After visiting my uncles we left for Clark, S. D., as it was near there that the cousins lived. They thought we should visit them and perhaps settle there. We children were very excited, as we knew we would be starting to American schools that fall. What we didn't realize was the difficulty we would encounter by not being able to speak the common language, and being considered foreigners. Children can be very cruel, however our difficulties were soon overcome, as our parents could speak English and a cousin who came to help Mother also helped us with our reading. At the end of the first term we had covered three or four grades.

While living in Clark we met other Danish families, among them a Mr. Hans Hansen and family. He had decided to go to Mellette County and try homesteading. He was so enthused about it that my father caught the fever. Hansens had horses, machinery, cows and chickens plus farming experience, also a family of four children.

If my father was still alive I'm sure he could have written a good story as he had a knack for writing and loved to write. My mother has a scrap book full of clippings from papers that he wrote. My father passed away at the age of 59 and my mother is now 82. My brother, who would have been a great help in writing this, passed away two years ago, also at the age of 59. Perhaps I'll miss some of the dates and names but I'm writing things as I recall them and using for reference some letters that Father wrote while on his memorable trip to Mellette County.

Hans Hansen and Father loaded an immigrant car. At that time many people were going by immigrant cars to the land openings and to homestead. It was a beautiful day the twelfth of March 1913 when Father and Hans set out. In fact, it was such a warm day that as the men waved goodbye from the top of the cars they were in their shirt sleeves. However, that night things changed and when Father wrote to us at 5:30 P.M. on the 14th of March, 1913, he said they had run into a terrible blizzard that first night and were snowbound at Chamberlain, S. D.

They had to unload the livestock into another car and make a hole in the roof of their immigrant car so they could set up a stove in order to keep from freezing to death. They also tried to save all the potatoes my father had brought for seed. He planned to raise and sell potatoes and other vegetables. They also had a lot of canned goods along, besides our dog and some chickens. Two days later my father wrote that all the potatoes and canned goods had frozen and they could not keep warm enough to stay there in the car, themselves. He also wrote later that a whole trainload of Texas cattle that had been snowed in, had smothered and frozen to death on the tracks a little farther west.

March 22, my father wrote that 20 immigrant cars were waiting at Oacoma in Lyman County unable to proceed farther. He wished us a Happy Easter and said it looked like he would spend the rest of his life where they were. It was not until the 25th of March that a rotary snowplow out of Minneapolis opened the road and they were able to get to Murdo. Murdo was the closest railroad town to White River; everything was freighted by horses from there to White River 30 some miles to the south.

The men now had to haul their possessions to their homesteads, also the lumber to build their shacks, as they called the homesteader's one-room house. Some people made them of sod and we were happy to be able to have made ours of lumber. Hansens' claim was about seven miles from ours I believe. After the men had our shack built, we were sent for. My brother and I thought it was a real adventure but our mother had her doubts as we got closer to Murdo and saw all the melting snow and mud. A man met us in Murdo with a stage coach, of sorts, but it wasn't enclosed. It was a terrible trip as the roads were almost impassable. Very late at night he brought us to our home—a one-room shack, out in the middle of nowhere. At least that was the way it seemed to us as we could see no other buildings. White River was only about three and one-half miles west of us but due to a ridge of hills it could not be seen.

Now our pioneering began in earnest; for four people who had been used to the city the stage was now a vast prairie with Badlands for a background. The eerie notes of the hoot owl and mournful howl of the coyote, then the cheerful notes of the meadow lark song were all unfamiliar sounds at first, but ones we learned to associate with the prairie life.

We built a sod house for our chickens that had somehow survived. Another dugout was built to house the one milk cow we had bought. Hans Hansen must have plowed our land for us as we didn't have any horses or machinery yet. We planted potatoes, beans, corn, garden, a little grain and a large patch of watermelons. That year, we didn't plant very many potatoes due to losing our seed potatoes.

**Andersen homestead shack. Mrs. Andersen, Lawrence and Ida.**

When all the spring work was done my father bought an old blind horse as we had to haul our water on a stoneboat. I guess that's what they call two by fours laid crosswise on some poles. On this sort of a sled we put barrels and cans to put the water in. By that time, our money was beginning to run low, and knowing we would have no income for a while, my father decided that Mother and we two children could carry on alone until school would start in September. He had heard of a good job in a big hotel in Colorado Springs, Colo. He spoke good English and secured a good paying job for about three months. It gave us a real lift and we did survive in spite of Mother's near accident. She saw a large number of coyotes or wolves, one moonlight night, out around the chicken house. She thought she would scare them off but was too scared to go outside. She took a revolver that Father had left with us, although she didn't know how to shoot it, and she put her head down near it to aim it. She shot through the screen door and something happened, we never did know just what, but it knocked her over and she nearly lost her hearing. I guess a revolver shouldn't be held against the screen and fired with your nose so close to it.

We had had many harrowing experiences, especially with the rattlesnakes, they seemed to be everywhere. A dear schoolmate of mine died from being bitten. I have a necklace that my father made for me of snake rattles.

That fall when school started, the folks decided that Dad would have to start a little business in town so he could walk into town every morning and back again in the evening, with us children, especially to protect us from the rattlesnakes. So Father started a little dry cleaning business as that is what he had done in Clark. There weren't many people that had their clothes dry cleaned those days, so he decided he could also fix shoes and harnesses. I don't know how he ever managed, but someone had some equipment they wanted to sell and said it was easy, so he took that on. Also he learned how to test cream and bought that.

Mother wasn't very happy to be left alone all day like that but by now we had a neighbor that had filed on a claim joining ours. It was only a half mile to another house now, but that can be a long way to go for help. I found that out once, when I went running all the way to get help when my mother had been thrown from a horse. I had come home and found her near the fence where she had crawled. Oh, yes, pioneering can also be frightening!

Mother kept very busy, keeping our little house clean, looking after the chickens and the garden. She also sewed a lot.

Our second spring there, we dug a well by hand but when we hit blue shale we gave up for the time being and dug a cave, or a cyclone cellar as some called them. It was a wonderful place to keep our cream, milk and butter, especially when it got to 116 degrees on the prairie. There was not a tree in sight and when it got too hot in the shack we also liked to go into the cave. While we were digging our cave, our blind horse somehow walked into it one night. There he stood, early in the morning. What a sight! Brother and I dug steps for him so we could lead him out. We were very fond of that old horse. When we had prospered and bought other horses, Dad thought we should dispose of him. He took up room in the barn needed for the other horses but my brother and I decided we would build him a dugout barn on the hillside so he could keep warm during the winter. We had no more than got started on this project when the good old horse laid down and died peacefully in his old stall.

My parents worked very hard and earned the respect of the business people in White River, so the bank loaned my father a considerable amount of money with which to go to Winner and buy a herd of Hereford cattle. It was a gala day when my father and brother brought back the cattle. We were now in the cattle business. We all worked very hard as we were very anxious to have a nice home, good horses, and the haying equipment needed. It was also very important to my father to show some of the other homesteaders, that he, in spite of being a green horn and a foreigner could do as well or better than anyone. It was a good life, especially for us children.

Life wasn't all a serious struggle. There was warm community spirit. The school house in White River was the center of community interests. Both religious and social gatherings took place there. People had to look to themselves for entertainment. We had wonderful literary meetings and debating was always keen. Box and pie socials, where a girl's pie was auctioned off, was really popular in those days. People never seemed too busy to take the day off on the Fourth of July to go to some colorful gathering, in spite of the fact that they had to go by horse and buggy. I remember one Fourth of July it got so cold it started to snow and we all went home.

A pioneer story wouldn't be complete without an Indian story, especially since this homesteading was done on an Indian Reservation. I'm sure the old residents remember the time that for some reason the monthly allotment check to the Indians failed to come.

It seemed that a whole group from the Sioux Tribe were gathered at their village along the river below the town of White River. We could plainly hear their drums and it was a weird sound. My father and mother decided they wanted to drive down and see all their teepees. We had a very fine educated Indian neighbor to the north of us a couple miles. His name was John Bordeaux and he told us it would not be dangerous. Mr. and Mrs. Ed Olson, who lived northwest of us, told Mother the Indians might scalp her because she had such nice long hair. Mother and Dad drove off and we were left at home. When they came home they were really concerned. It seems all kinds of stories were being told and some of the people were frightened. Some of them were even getting ready to leave. It was said that someone even considered having the militia sent out. After some time the money for the Indians finally came through and the big scare was over.

My father became Justice of the Peace, an office he took very seriously, especially when people came to be married. He always felt that he should dress up for the occasion. However, sometimes he didn't get a chance and would marry a couple while still wearing his overalls.

My father finally became a potato king several years after his seed potatoes froze. I have the picture showing him with his bucket of Paris Green that he sprinkled on by hand. We bugged them, hoed them and dug them all by hand, too. However we did plant them with a corn planter. I sat behind, some place, on the machine and dropped them in the furrows.

**Chris Andersen picking potato bugs.**

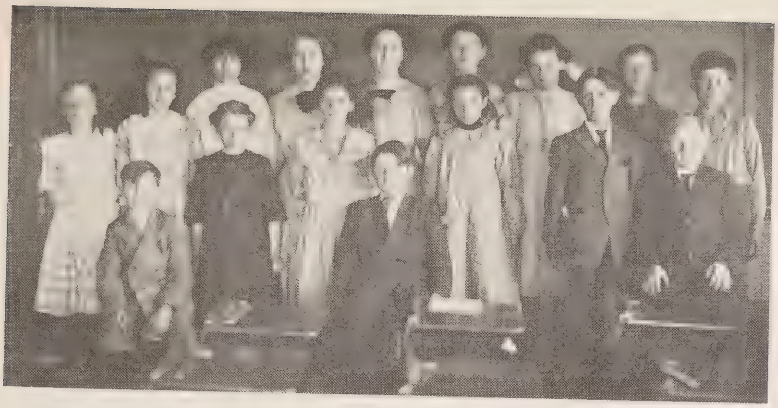
We also raised many navy beans. I remember during World War I when Belgium was facing starvation, my father sent over grain sacks of beans that we had harvested by hand. Dad received a certificate of thanks from the King of Belgium. Living on a homestead, one soon learns to share with others.

People were always ready to help you. I remember one day the Ed Olsons came over and Mother was baking bread but she didn't have it ready for dinner. So Mrs. Olson taught us how to make "Squaw Bread." You pulled a piece of the dough as thin as possible and fried it in hot fat. We all liked it. I've made it many times for my children and also grandchildren, always thinking of Mrs. Olson. She also taught us to add soda to our beans when boiling them in hard water to make them tender. We had so much to learn in this new land.

My mother knew how to take care of sick people and when the Boss Farmer's wife from the Indian village became very ill Mother nursed her back to good health and earned her gratitude. When my father's good friend, Marin Georgeff, then a blacksmith in White River, became sick with typhoid fever, Father brought him home for Mother to take care of him. We are still friends of Marin Georgeff, and his wife, whom he later went back to Bulgaria to marry.

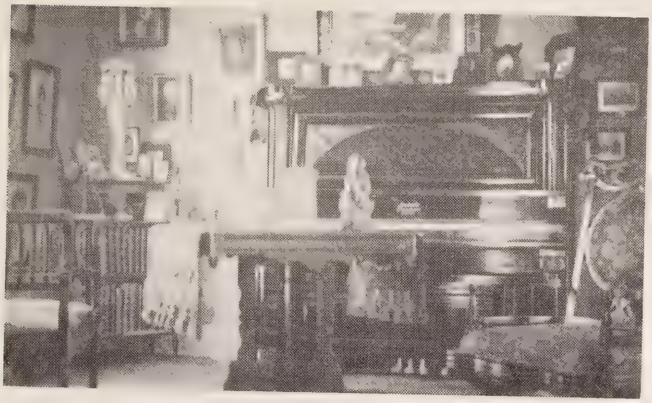
When White River decided they needed a church built, much enthusiasm was shown. My father offered to help haul lumber from Murdo. He hauled many loads with his horses in lieu of money as somehow there never seemed to be too much of that. Pastor Richards served in the new church and later his wife died of the flu.

It was a wonderful free life for my brother and me. We rode our ponies to our hearts' content. Skiing was a favorite winter sport, also skating on the Little White River. In those days there seemed to be more time for good wholesome fun.

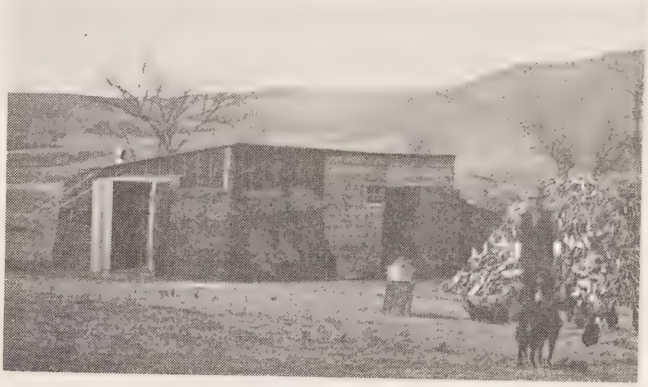


Very early school in White River; Ida at left.

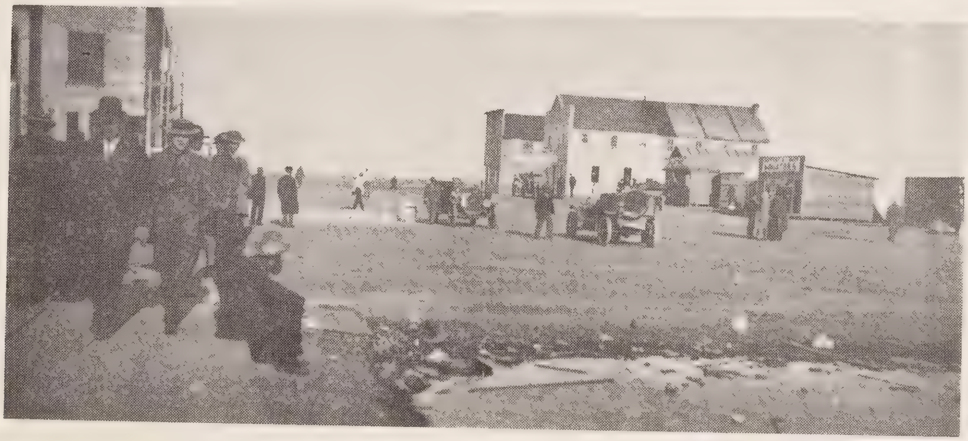
Ida's mother



Inside Andersens home. Notice piano.

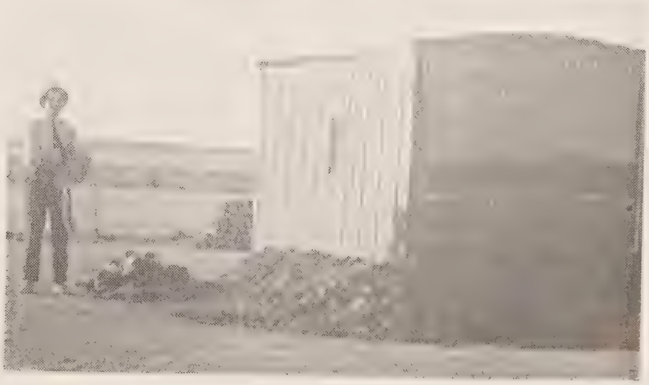


John Vicks' homestead, 1912



White River Scene. Tomsik Hotel at right.

John and Neal Staat



Girl Wanted

In the summer there were the White River Frontier Days. People came from the Eastern states and all over. The Mock Indian Attacks that were staged were exciting and goodness knows there were plenty of Indians. The town was completely encircled by teepees and tents. And good times were had by all. Eastern Rodeos seemed pretty tame after seeing the rodeos at White River. Most of the horses and cattle used in those first Frontier Days were really wild. Some had never been in a corral before or been touched by human hands. You do not see that kind of horses at these modern rodeos.

When I was 14 years old, Mother and I went to Redfield, S. D., to visit my uncles. While I was there I learned to ride a bicycle. When I came back I wanted to use my savings of $17.00 towards buying a bicycle but my father thought a piano would be a better investment as we had plenty of ponies to ride. He told me if I would give him my money he would buy a $500.00 piano for me. He did, and I still have it and now my grandchildren play it when they come to see us. I rode many miles to take music lessons, first from Mrs. Hans Hansen, then after they left I went to Tom Gallagher's but that was too far. When I was in the eighth grade I took lessons from Mrs. Noah Gerig, my teacher's wife. Mr. Gerig was a fine teacher. I was also fond of Miss Cummings, my sixth grade teacher. My parents sent me to Redfield, S. D., to high school.

Thomas Green, Mellette County Superintendent of schools asked me to teach school. Mr. Green thought me capable of the position as I had graduated second highest in the eighth grade in the county, in spite of the fact that I missed so much time that term, due to my mother's illness and the serious operation she underwent in Omaha. I took a teachers examination and passed it and taught in the coldest winter we had all the while we lived there—also the most snow. I taught in a rural school. That was the winter I almost became food for coyotes or wolves one night.

It was a winter evening around Christmas time and I got lost on the prairie. We were having a Christmas program and basket social. I wanted to get to the school house early so I decided to walk ahead and not wait to ride with Mr. and Mrs. Clemens where I was boarding. While walking I became lost, due to the fact that I had broken my glasses; being very near sighted, the light from the lamp I'd left burning at the school blended in with the twinkling stars that were shining that bitter cold night. I realized I was lost and started calling. Luck was with me. Two of my eighth grade pupils, Helen and William Jensen, were also walking to school. They were carrying a lantern and they heard me and answered. I finally saw their lantern swinging and heard their voices. I was really happy to follow those two children to the school house. I will always remember Helen; she had a beautiful voice and could really sing. She was a great help in leading the singing at our school. Her mother had passed away and she did a wonderful job of helping her dad keep house for him and her brother. Sometimes, in preparing for a program I'd take her along home with me so we could practice with the piano and learn the songs to be used in the program.

By 1918 my father was beginning to think of leaving the homestead as the work was really too much for us. My parents wanted me to go to school more and my brother wanted to try something else. By now we had added another quarter of land to our homestead and also filed on land in Washabaugh County. We bought the land from our neighbor on the east, a Mr. Ozanne. Prices of cattle and everything were very good, so my father decided to have a sale in the spring of 1919. We had one pony we had grown to love very much. We couldn't bear to sell her so we asked some friends and neighbors by the name of Fredricksen to keep her and use her until we could come for her. But something happened to "Fannie" before we could come for her.

I have always intended to write a book about our homestead days. So this is a part of the pioneering days in the life of Christian and Christine Andersen, their son Lawrence and their daughter Ida.

# Tottens, Last Homesteaders In Mellette County

**By Blanche Kaufman**

Fifty years ago my parents moved to South Dakota. They crossed the Missouri River at Springfield on a ferry boat and then went by train to Wagner, where we lived for three years. My dad, Mr. Rickgauer, owned a livery stable where he rented out teams and buggies, also saddle horses.

As cars became more numerous the livery business declined so our parents decided that a farm would be a good place to live and we moved to the west side of the Missouri River in Gregory County. We lived there until 1916 when my folks moved to an island, called Colombe Island.

Six years on an island in the river were difficult at times. The only way we could reach the mainland was by rowboat. My younger brother and I went to the mainland to school. We rode across in the morning and back at night. In the spring, when the ice began breaking up in the river, it would reach our island usually by late afternoon. So we kids would hurry down to the river right after school to try to beat the ice. Sometimes it was down to our boat landing by the time school was out. We had to use our own judgment as to whether we could get across ahead of the ice. If not, we didn't get home that night. Usually, the ice would be all past by morning and we could cross the river before it began to thaw farther up the next day.

When we needed supplies, we swam a team behind a rowboat to the mainland, then borrowed a wagon from a neighbor and went to town. When we came back, we loaded the supplies into the boat and went home again—with the horses swimming behind. We had to be very careful or they would try to climb into the boat and dump everything into the water. In the winter it was easier as we crossed on the ice.

We children had a lot of fun on the ice, skating and sledding with the neighbor children. We did a lot of fishing, of course. We used what we called a hoop net and throw lines. We had to use a boat to go out and tie them to a tree stump or something away from the shore.

The island was covered with trees and brush which we had to clear off before we could use the land. We never cleared it all but had a field where we raised corn and we had a very large garden. We used the brush to weave a fence around the cleared land. This fooled the horses and cattle but not the hogs. Eventually, my dad built a wire fence. Some of it was still standing when the Fort Randall dam flooded the island.

The stock watered at the river and we had a lot of trouble with cattle getting stuck in the quick-sand. The sand-bars built up at the end of the island and weak cows had trouble getting out of the sand bogs. We lost one horse that got stuck in the quick-sand. When we found him, just his head and his back was sticking out of the sand and he was already dead.

The first year, we planted corn by making holes with a hoe and dropping in the kernels. It went quite fast, with Dad making the holes, one of us children dropping in the corn and another one covering it up. Later we used a hand-planter. This was a contraption made of narrow boards about three foot long, three or four inches wide at the top and tapering to about an inch at the bottom. One board had a metal container for the seed corn fastened to it. There was a metal tip or jabber on the bottom that made the hole. There were handles at the top to operate the dropper. One person could plant a lot of corn or beans, melons, pumpkins and similar large seeds in quite a short time.

We raised a large garden which supplied us with all the vegetables we could use and many to sell. One year my mother canned more than 500 quarts of tomatoes in glass jars and sold them. Dad, my brother and I picked the tomatoes and peeled them for her while she did the canning. Mother made many pickles for sale also. In those days, pickles were made by putting in layers of cucumbers, a sprinkling of salt, more cukes, more salt and so on, until the big stone jars or wooden kegs were full. A cover and a weight were put on top, to hold them under the brine. Then during the winter the salt was soaked out and they were made into sweet, sour or dill pickles. Mother made her own yeast for bread, also her own soap as a great many women did at that time. Like most people, during the war years, we had difficulty in getting flour. We kids never forgot eating bread made from corn meal, potato flour, rice flour and other substitutes. What a treat it was when we could have some real home-baked white bread.

The islands on the river were havens for wild ducks and geese. Nearly always sand bars formed at the upper end of an island and thousands of ducks and geese would land on these bars.

During World War I the flu broke out and many people died from it. Moonshine and bootleg days came along about this time. Suspicious characters often used the many river islands as hideouts. This was also true, in the very early days of cattle rustling, when the vigilantes hunted out and punished some of these men.

We always thought spring was the most dangerous time of year on the river. When the ice began to thaw, it would honeycomb and the water would come up through it but we would need to cross occasionally. Sometimes the water would rise over the ice then freeze again. The ice underneath could be a life saver when people broke through the top ice as I did one time. In all the years we lived on the island I never learned to swim, neither did my mother. In the fall when the ice began freezing just a thin layer, we would break the ice ahead of the boat with a stick. Once when my mother was helping break the ice she fell in, backwards!

When my dad built a fence he built it strong. To make good strong gates, he cut poles from cedar trees which he peeled and trimmed. He made slots at each side of the gate for these bars to fit in. Then we would let the bars down at one end, so the stock could pass through. When Dad wasn't looking, we kids would let down only one or two of the top bars and make the cows jump over the rest. When Dad was home we did things properly. When he was away we did a lot of crazy things, like trying to break the colts to lead (Dad had a lot of horses) and they would get away from us with his good lariat rope. We would have to hunt until we found the colt for fear it would get hung up in the timber and, besides, we had to get that rope back.

One time we hung a cowbell on our favorite saddle horse. That was one trick we never tried again. The horse almost went crazy, she was so scared. We were scared too. Once Dad bought 20 head of horses of assorted ages, broken and unbroken, so we had our pick for saddle horses. We never had a saddle so when we wanted to get on one big horse we would get her to put her head down, get on her neck and when she raised her head we could slide down onto her back. My brother would go out, call to her and she would come running to him but she wouldn't come to me. Our dad taught us how to hitch up four or six horses abreast and do field work with them.

The trees were so beautiful in the winter with the snow on them. We only killed one rattlesnake while we lived on the island. We saw plenty of bull snakes, sand adders and blue racers. Once we saw a timber wolf trying to catch our ducks. This was no coyote, this was a genuine grey wolf and a big one. We never saw him again after that first year but we often saw his tracks. It sent the chills up your back when you heard him howl. There had been deer on the island, we did not see any but after a timber fire we found the remains of one.

A man, whose nickname was Sugar-Foot, taught us kids how to find and dig what he called wild beans, they were very tasty when cooked. Our dad taught us where to find mushrooms, around old tree stumps after a rain. We would clean them and Mother cooked them. They were so good; we knew which kinds were poisonous and avoided them. There were all kinds of wild fruits.

In the summer, people traveled up and down the river in rowboats and house boats. Many of them tied up at the island and visited with us. A big steam-boat came up the river about once a year and it would tie up at the island overnight. They bought eggs, milk, butter and garden vegetables from us. We were allowed to go on the boat and the captain's wife would show us all around on it. One was called the Mandan and its duty on the river was to pull snags out of the water, I think.

In a few years, my dad moved a sawmill over onto the island and a big steam engine to run it with. We two kids had to keep the engine fired up and watch the water gauge, also the steam pressure. Some of the logs were so big that it made that big old engine work real hard to saw them into lumber. We had a donkey steam engine, too, to cut wood for the big engine. When they moved that big steam engine over they crossed on the ice. They built a frame or platform of 12 x 14 inch timbers, 32 feet square. They drove the engine onto this, then used a stump puller to move it across the ice. A plowshare fastened in the ice anchored the cable. They tried to drive it across but the ice wouldn't hold it that way. Wilfred Totten, whom I later married, helped to move this big engine across the ice. The big cottonwood trees were cut off close to the ground, the bark peeled off, limbs trimmed, then they were hauled on the running gears of a wagon or drug on the ground by a team, to the saw. I suppose the old engine was still on the island when the waters of the Fort Randall dam covered all the islands and river bottom lands.

There were no churches on the river bottom but Sunday school was held in the old school house and social gatherings took place in the homes for both young and old. The young folks went horseback riding for a pastime. My folks went to Lucas to church and also once a week, on Friday, to get the mail. Whoever went to town, brought back the mail for the whole neighborhood.

The only people who lived on this island when we did, were our hired help and their families. Most of the time we were the only ones living there. There was only about 300 acres of usable land on the island, the rest was low enough to be flooded. There was what was called a high bench, where the buildings stood, but once during very high water the river came within a few rods of us.

When I was almost 18, I left the island and worked for a time, doing house work for four dollars a week. In the spring of 1922 Wilfred Totten and I were married. The next year we lived on a farm near the river again. A rancher owned quite a few wild horses (anyway we thought they were wild when Wilfred started breaking them) and he gave us some horses to break for him. That was what we did in Wilfred's spare time. Some of them were so wild that they never gave in. A number of them that we broke still fought you every time you came near them. But there also were a few that became real gentle. He finally got enough broke, so when we moved to Mission, S. D., in 1925 we had enough horses to work.

In 1928 we moved to Washabaugh County, west of Norris. By that time, he had this bunch of broncs broke well enough so he could work eight head at a time on a breaking plow. But they still watched their chance when he harnessed them to try to take a bite out of him or give him a kick.

I believe we can claim the distinction of being the last people to file on a homestead in Mellette County. We filed in the fall of 1930 on a strip of land on the east side of the county line between Mellette and Washabaugh Counties, about two miles from Norris. We moved onto this homestead on March 17, 1931. This strip of land is thirteen and one half rods wide, one and a half miles long and contains about 41 acres.

By this time we had four children: Jake, Robert, Richard and Kenneth. Vernon, Will and Rex were born on the homestead. In 1945 we lost a baby boy.

Jake is employed in Kadoka, owns his own home and is still single. Robert is Postmaster at Norris, married; he and Ellen have one daughter. Richard is married; he and Erna have four children and live on a farm near Norris. Vernon manages a filling station in New Jersey; he and Ruth have five children. Will is single, working on a ranch west of Kadoka, S. D. Kenneth is a mechanic in Rapid City; he and Virginia have three children. Rex and Lea live in Rapid City and he works for a roofing concern.

Wilfred has been mail carrier on the Rosebud to Mission route for nearly 15 years. We left the homestead and moved to Norris in 1946 to be near his work.

# Homesteading Three Miles From My Parents' Homestead

**By Mrs. Florence Townsend**

We left Lincoln, Nebr., in 1913 with our two little boys, Rolland and Gaylord, age two and three.

My husband was a contractor and builder in Lincoln and doing fine. My parents, Mr. and Mrs. A. N. Asbury, and my brother Kenneth had gone up to Mellette County the year before and filed on a homestead, so we decided to sell our home and go file on a homestead, too. We hired a railroad car, took our horse, Billie, our buggy and what furniture and things we would need. We even bought a cow to bring along as cattle were a higher price up in South Dakota.

We arrived in Winner. Mama and Papa met us and we drove out with all our belongings to their homestead. It was a long drive, taking two days. We stopped overnight enroute.

We built a shack on the hill and built onto it later. Our house was among the hills on a creek and was in a very pretty location. We always raised a nice garden in that little valley.

Jim and Fay Rennick, 1914

We were about three miles from my mother and father's homestead and a year or so later my sister Fay and her husband, Jim Rennick, came and filed on a homestead about two miles from us. In fact, it was between us and the folks.

Everyone worked hard, broke up the prairie, bought cows, horses and tools as soon as we could. It was hard going but we all did it.

We had lots of experiences. I will never forget the first rattlesnake, a big one—I killed. The little boys and I had just driven into our yard and there it was, right in front of us ready to strike. I left them in the buggy while I hurried and got a hoe. I was frantic and shaking with fright but I killed it although I almost fainted afterwards.

We got acquainted with our neighbors; Broods, Blackburns, Emericks, Fridys, Hales, Buums, McCauleys, Beilkes, Mitchells, MacDonalds and others.

Sunday schools and country schools were started. We had many social gatherings and good times, also hard times, too.

Later, my sister, Fay, and her husband, Jim Rennick, decided to go into the Indian service. Jim was Boss Farmer and Fay taught in the Indian schools for 12 years on the Rosebud Reservation. They were at Wood a while. They liked Government work better than homesteading. Their daughter, Verle, was born at Wood in 1918. She was the only child they ever had.

My husband taught school while we were homesteading. Rolland's first school term was, I think, at the McCauley school where his dad taught. My husband had to carry him over the snow drifts in the bitter cold winter. He also taught the Brood School.

Townsends homestead, 1915

The blizzards were terrible. Often we were out in them when we couldn't see a thing ahead of us or tell which way to go so we would let the horses go and they always took us home. My brother Kenneth never lost his direction as many did.

We built in three locations while we lived on our homestead. Number one was the sod shanty in the little valley that I mentioned before. This was partly a dugout, built into the hill and a lumber addition was built on later. Then we used the sod part to store the vegetables and canned fruit in. Number two was a mile west on the creek. It was a real house, had three rooms, located in the trees. By this time we had a lot of cattle and milk cows and the boys had their own ponies to ride. The third location was a mile farther on over, by the main river road. This was a four-room house built in 1918 near the Little White River.

Asburys, Townsends and Rennicks
1920

It was while we were living there that Gaylord, age seven, was bitten by a large rattlesnake. Mr. Fridy took us in his car to Doctor Schmitters in White River. We had to stay four weeks at the Jones Hotel. We had two rooms and my mother came and helped take care of him. The doctor came three times a day and said if I had not sucked out the poison, we would have lost him. We almost did anyway.

We never went back to the homestead to live. We moved into White River and Irvin began contracting and building again.

While living in the number three house on the homestead, Irvin had pneumonia in both lungs and would have died if my mother had not taken such good care of him.

Elmo Hale and family bought this part of the homestead and number three house.

The first prairie fire I saw was miles wide and was coming right toward us, fast and furious. The flames were like they were a mile high! We were at Mother's; they were living at the Beilke place, about two miles from MacDonalds. We couldn't do much, but the men from the whole country were out setting backfires and fighting fire. My mother took coffee and lunch out to those she could see or locate.

We lived a while on the Rennick homestead. Rollie and Gay were old enough to milk cows and often did. We were milking 12 and the boys were a big help. One day my mother and I drove to White River and it was after dark before we got home. We couldn't find the boys right away. After a while we found them asleep on top of the slanting kitchen roof. They said that they had crawled up there because they didn't want the coyotes to get them. They had milked the 12 cows first though and they were glad we got home.

The Indians had many celebrations and camped near the Little White River. My mother and I would bake dozens and dozens of cup cakes and other bakery things and drive the team and buggy with our baked goods to the Indian camp. They would buy everything we could bake, and we needed the extra money very much.

During homestead days my husband froze his face and hands several times. One time he got lost coming out to the homestead from Winner. He had to build a fire along the creek bank and stay awake all night to keep from freezing. The next morning he went to an Indian house to find out where he was. They gave him pumpkin pie for breakfast and he found out that he was only about two miles over the hills from Jim and Fay Rennick's homestead.

One time I had to drive out from Winner alone; I had our horse Billie and a buggy. I was about half way home, and it was getting dark, when it began to rain. Suddenly Billie stopped and wouldn't go on. I got out to look and there was a big ditch in front of him. I was scared stiff. I unhitched him, tied him to the buggy with his back to the wind and we stayed there on the prairie all night. I was afraid; the coyotes were howling and it was cold and raining. When daylight came I could see the Indian Mission school, where Irvin was waiting for me, about five miles ahead. We drove on, to the homestead and I was glad to get home safe.

The following is from a clipping from the White River newspaper:

"Mr. and Mrs. I. A. Townsend were surprised by a large number of their friends, it being their wedding anniversary, also Mrs. Townsend's birthday. The crowd kidnapped them and drove to the Rennick home where a mock marriage was performed by P. J. Fort. The evening was spent in games, with lots of ice cream and good things to eat." The house was full of people. My husband had recently gotten into poison ivy so had such a swollen face and hands they could hardly recognize him.

After Gaylord was bitten by the snake we bought a house in White River. Irvin contracted and built lots of new houses and country school houses. He joined the Masons and Odd Fellows. We joined the Methodist church, and helped build it. I was the church and Sunday School pianist, playing at all the Easter, Christmas and other programs. We had many gatherings in the church basement with excellent programs. There were very many talented folks and everyone was willing to help with everything.

Frontier Days were the big event every year. Indian dances and rodeos. Thousands of Indians would come from every place. They camped all around White River and down on the river. Cowboys came from all over. All the rooms in the hotels were full, rented out 24 hours a day. Everyone who had rooms to rent would help out. White River was full.

In the wintertime, many of the men in White River would go down to the river and cut ice into two hundred pound chunks. They hauled it up to the ice house at White River, packed it in saw dust, for the folks to use during the hot summer months.

Most of us had cows or at least a milk cow. Milk was 10¢ a quart delivered. Gladys Eaton was the first to drive the town cows out of the town to pasture every day.

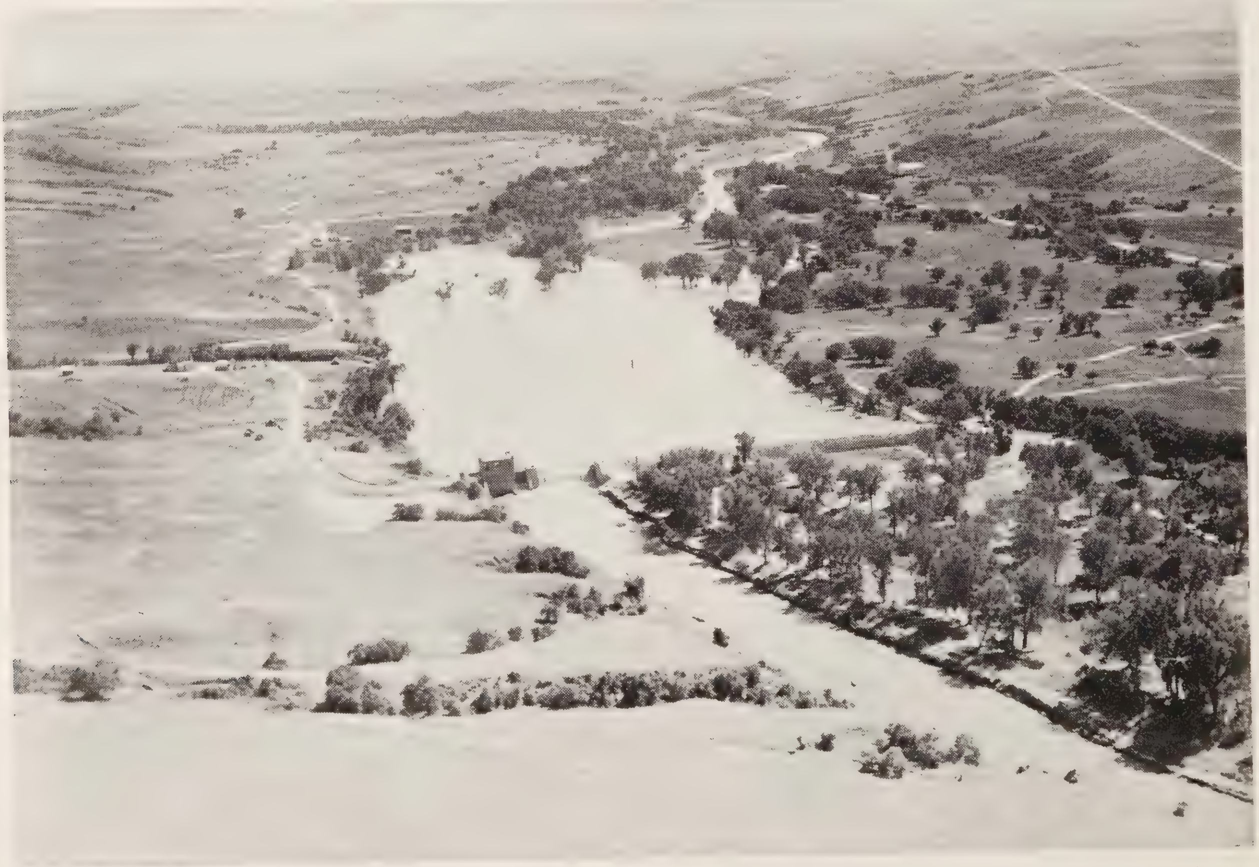
Swanson, west of town, had the first dairy. I had the first cream station. The farmers all had cream separators on their farms and would bring in their big ten gallon cream cans full of cream. I would test the cream and it would be sent on up to the Murdo Creamery from White River.

There were two hotels, Jones and Tomsik, when we moved to town.

Mr. Townsend built the first movie house for a Burrington who also had the first pop factory. Bud Kent had the water wagon business. Holland and Hocking had the general stores. Fred Schwartz operated the light plant. Gerig owned the Mellette County News office. Mrs. Gerig helped him in the office. Graham was the town marshal. Joe (Shorty) Scull had the mail route from White River to Winner. He used a stripped down, Model T, one day going to Winner and returning the next day. Bohannan had the lumber yard. This was the way White River was in 1918 and later, when we lived there.

McCauley had a country store (Neville) where he lived on a homestead about 12 miles south of White River, some 3 miles from our old claim.

Mr. Townsend made and laid all the cement blocks for Holland's store, Strain's and Scull's basements. He



**The Little White River — that flows north! Looking south at the Hydro-Electric Dam, about 1924.**

also made all the curbs, sidewalks and crosswalks of cement. He made all the cement blocks for the power house at the Dam and laid them. The American Hall was built on main street in White River and was used for school basket ball games, box suppers and dances. Burrington used it for the first moving pictures in town and Mrs. Burrington sold tickets. Their little boys, Hugh and Vernon, took the tickets at the door and Mr. Burrington operated the film projector. Mrs. Burrington also played a player piano for the silent movies.

Tom Green owned the first radio in town which had earphones.

After Sunday School at the M.E. church the parents would stay to church and later go to each others homes for dinner and visiting. Our boys, Rollie and Gay Townsend, with Bill Day, Bev Witherspoon, Kyle and Kenny Kent, Max Barton, Gerald Barton, Granville Crockett, Bill Smith and other kids and cowboys would go to some ranch and have little rodeos. They rode out bucking horses, steers and calves, did roping and bull dogging. They had wonderful times together.

The winters in the early twenties were very cold, often below zero with lots of snow. People used a lot of coal. Mr. Townsend hauled coal by truck from Murdo when not building. Rollie and Gay were around 13 or 14 years old by then and went with him many times to help.

We also made many cement blocks. We had a large shed and they helped with that too. We sold them and also used them in his contracting work. White River grew fast and so did the county. More schools were needed. During the summer the boys and I went along out on the country school jobs. I cooked for the men, we had various tents and shacks to live in. Gilbert Eaton was like one of the family and worked with Irvin all the time. He went out and got lots of prairie chickens to eat and they were the best, I will never forget how delicious they were. We bought and sold houses several times while we were in White River.

A prize of $20.00 was offered for a name of a new highway which would run through the United States from the southern boundary of Texas to the Canadian line. This highway would go through the towns of White River, Mission and Murdo (now known as Highway 83). The prize was won by my father A. N. Asbury. The name he suggested was selected from 75 names sent in. The name was the "Blue and Gray" and also the trail mark on white background. The white represented peace between the North and South.

Because of the intense cold winters, my parents later moved to Tipton, Mo. In 1924 we sold out and moved, too. We took what we wanted to keep in our big panel car. Of course we took our piano and it made a big load. First we went to Missouri to see my parents. Next we went to Arkansas, Oklahoma, New Mexico and then to California in 1932, always contracting, building and selling as we traveled. My folks came out to California in 1936. Fay and Jim moved to Clinton, Okla., then to Denver, staying in the Indian Service until he retired.

My father, A. N. Asbury, passed away April 7, 1941. My brother Kenneth was going back to his work the next day after the funeral and was killed in an accident. Mother passed away May 6, 1943. My husband died of heart trouble April 11, 1951. My sister Fay passed away in Denver April 7, 1956.

Rollie is living with me and Gaylord is living about four hundred miles North of here.

(Rolland Townsend passed away November 7, 1961.)

# The Trautman Story

**By Mrs. Fred Trautman**

We drove out to Mellette County from Burke, S. D. It was in June 1918. We had a tent over our hayrack and in it was our bed, table, oil stove, cream separator, and other equipment. We also had 22 cows that we drove through with us. They were real good and stayed near the wagon when we camped. We milked night and morning.

Our first hot day of the trip was on a Sunday. We stopped at Jordan. The cows crowded around the buildings for shade and we couldn't do anything with them. So we sat in the shade of the wagon until it got cooler and we could go on our way.

We bought the homestead of Jake Phillipe. Neil Emerick was our neighbor to the north and Martha Kennedy to the west. We lived there until 1927 when we moved to White River. Later, we lived in and around Wood for some time.

We came out here to Washington state in 1943, driving two cars and a trailer.

Fred got a job at a mill, but the machinery noise gave him such headaches, so he started to grow strawberries and I worked in a restaurant.

Our 11 children are all married now and I have 29 grandchildren. I really enjoy them.

I still like to think over those hard times and good times we had in the early days. Every Saturday night we would gather at some neighbor's house and dance until daylight. The music was provided by my husband, Fred, and Loyd Wagner. The long distance to school for the children was the reason we moved away. Our boy, Orville, rode horseback to the Fridy school, which was all of four miles. One term he went to Burke and stayed with my mother. A daughter, Mildred Harrison, still lives in Mellette County and one son is in Ohio. The rest are all out here.

To this day, I would like to go back to the farm. I could be ever so tired, then I would go out and milk and I would feel rested and good as new.

Word was received when this book was being printed that N. A. Gerig, well-known homesteader and newspaperman, had passed away at his home in Missouri, March 3, 1962. See Gerig Story, page 58.

# Rosebud Before 1905

By J. B. Tripp, Jr.

Sometime during the morning of July 4, 1905, I boarded the stagecoach in front of the DeBell store at the Rosebud Agency. I was enroute to the White Sewing Machine Company to learn about automobiles. I had never seen one at that time. My purpose was to be able to bid on that same stage line some day. I expected to be gone about six months at the most.

In going east, I reversed the direction that my father had taken in 1883. As a young man in Connecticut, with a growing family, he had taken Horace Greeley's advice and moved to Dakota Territory, onto a farm five miles south of Yorktown. (Yorktown is now White Lake; the names, Yorktown and Yankton, were so much alike that there were mixups and that explains the name change.)

The year 1883 happened to be in one of the wet cycles and everything was fine for a few years. Then came the drouth. Most of the farmers abandoned everything and simply moved away. Father was Republican and through a political friend obtained an appointment as teacher on the Rosebud Reservation. He, as teacher, received sixty dollars per month. Mother, as assistant, earned thirty dollars. That was very, very good money in those days and they must have been very happy at their good fortune.

In making the trip, everything we owned (except the farm) was loaded onto two lumber wagons. Charles, my older brother, drove one and Father the other. We crossed the Missouri River at Chamberlain on a horse-driven ferry, two horses on a treadmill. We made it to Oacoma the first night. We next stayed at either Butte or Oak Creek. This happened almost 70 years ago, but one thing I distinctly remember was that the road went along to the south of Haystack Butte and there was a tremendously big prairie dog town along there. We arrived at the Rosebud Agency the third night and the next day we went on to Black Pipe. George Wright was the agent at that time. He sent us a guide, one of the Black Pipe policemen, Punch Him. We arrived at our destination late in the afternoon.

This was the year 1891. At that time the Rosebud Reservation extended from the Big White River to the Nebraska line; from the Missouri River to Pine Ridge, not very far east of Pass Creek. Anyone seeing it then would scarcely recognize it now. There were no bridges over any of the creeks or rivers, no fences or plowed ground, no section lines, no ranches, in fact, no Whites at all except a few Government employees and a few men with Lakota wives. At that time Whites were not supposed to go onto the Reservation at all without a pass or special permit.

There was only one telephone, the one at the Rosebud Agency which was a hookup with Valentine, Nebr. There was no electricity. Automobiles had not been invented and anyway, there were no roads on which a modern car could have traveled — the ruts were too deep. There were no fire guards and no dams; and no regular letter service to the various camps.

DeBell Store in Rosebud, S. D., before 1905. Store now operated (1961) by T. V. Paulhamus; newly modernized.

When I left in 1905, things were not too much different. The Boarding School had been built. There was electricity and steam heat from the boiler room, but no telephone. Also, there was electricity at the Agency, but still the one phone. The one Post Office served the entire western part of the Reserve. St. Mary's and St. Francis were there before we arrived, but how long I have no idea. There were two stores at Cutmeat or Wo-so-so (now Parmelee). One store at Oak Creek and one at Butte Creek, which is now named Wood, for the man who built the store there. He also built the Oak Creek (now O'Kreek) store. He sold that to DeBell, left the Reserve for a year or more, then came back and built at Butte Creek (Wood).

The eastern end of the Reserve, down around Bonesteel, had been opened up to settlers. Some dams, in fact quite a few, had been built and there were at least two bridges across the Little White River. There was no permanent bridge across the Missouri, unless it was the one at Wheeler. The railroad still stopped at Chamberlain where there was a pontoon bridge, which was taken out in the fall before the river froze over. Also, there was ferry service at one or more points on the Big Muddy. Fireguards had been put in and some road building done by 1905.

At first, all the land, except perhaps that near each house, was owned or claimed in common. It was not until about 1900 that allotments were made. All the rest was open range. It really seems incredible now, how sparse the population was then.

Starting at the eastern end of the Reserve, there was a "Camp" Ponca, on the Keya Paya River near the Nebraska line. (A school and issue station. James McCorkle was the farmer there. I knew him when he was at Black Pipe.) Farther north on Thunder (?) Creek, there was another camp and school. There was nothing between these places and Oak Creek except a few places belonging to White men with Lakota wives or mixed bloods. From Oak Creek to the Rosebud Agency, there were St. Mary's, Kemmel, and Bounser, later on the boarding school. From the Agency to Black Pipe, there was nothing but Cut Meat. There were three camps on Black Pipe Creek, namely, Red Leaf, Black Pipe, and Corn Creek. (Later on, Corn Creek was called Black Pipe.) There were no camps between the Nebraska line on the south to the Big White (river) on the north. Going west from Black Pipe, there were no camps until Pass Creek. It must be remembered, too, that the camps were not compact villages. Black Pipe was stretched out along the creek for at least three miles, maybe more. Sometimes there would be a single house and at other times small groups of houses, according to the families, I think.

We were the first at Black Pipe after the Wounded Knee affair. In addition to the salary, ten cords of wood were furnished, living quarters, but no furniture except stoves, and of course, the school supplies. There were (still are, I suppose) some rifle bullet holes in the school house, which, the boys told us, had been shot in by some of the young fellows as a means of letting off steam before starting off for Pine Ridge and the big adventure.

Our nearest White neighbors were the Eatons at Corn Creek, four or five miles away. Later on, when the Issue Station was built, at what is now Norris, we thought that the country was becoming congested. Our nearest store was at the Agency. In the fall, Father and Mother always laid in an ample supply of canned goods, etc., to last until spring.

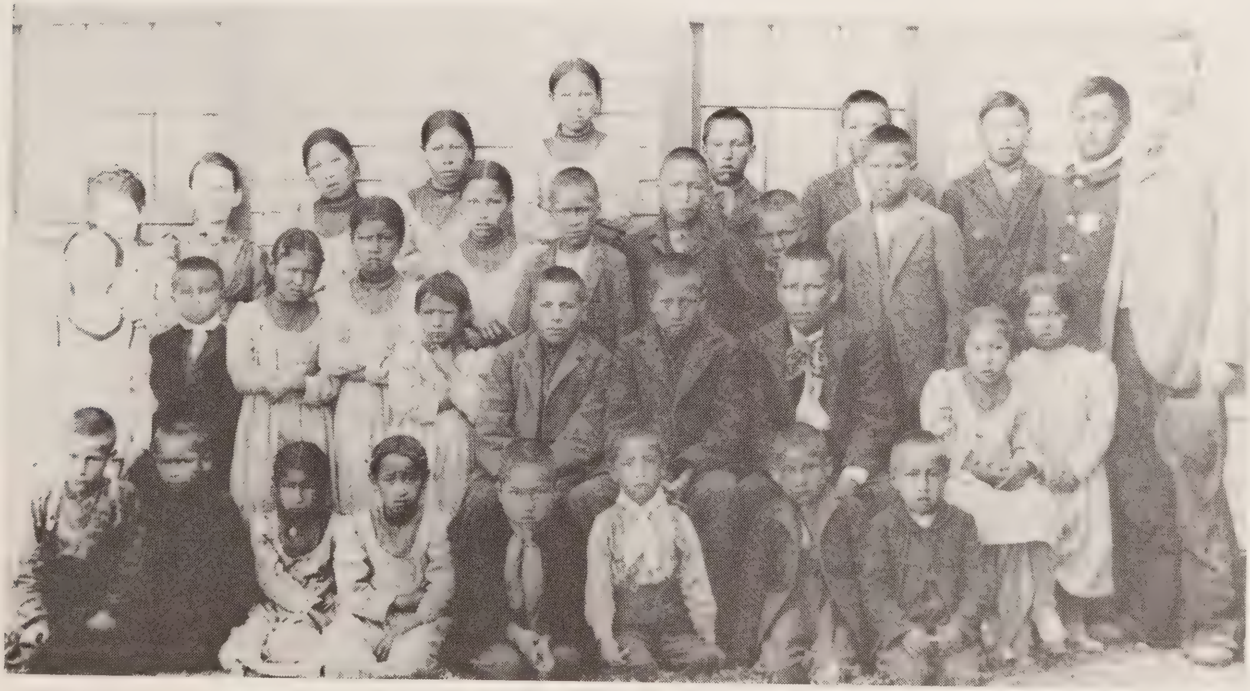
When Father opened the school, he had to re-name most of the children. For some unknown reason, they claimed that they did not know what their school name had been. In one corner of the school room, there was a medicine cabinet with some medicine; also one dental forceps that Father used later. He also had to give each boy a haircut. On most of them, their hair hung down to their shoulders. One of the big boys, Jackson Crazy Bear, actually shed tears as his was being cut, he so hated to have it done.

At that time, all the men in camp (with one exception, Reuben Quick Bear) had long hair. The younger men gradually became used to short hair so that by 1905, it was only the old men who still wore it long. They always braided the whorl at the top of the head into a separate braid. This was the scalp lock. It had some sort of a religious meaning, I always understood. The women and older girls did their hair in two braids, one hanging on each shoulder. Nearly all wore home-made moccasins. Some of these were beaded all over, including the soles. That was not very common except for children still being carried on the mother's back.

Some of the younger men and big boys sported cowboy boots. Most of the older men still wore the breechcloth (breech-clout, it was usually called) at least at times. Also the blanket. This extended to the feet and when made of heavy woolen material, was a real protection. At other times it was cotton sheeting. I have seen old men, walking out in bitterly cold weather, wearing nothing but a thin cotton shirt, cotton leggings, cotton breech-clout, cotton topped moccasins with thin soles, and a thin cotton blanket. No head covering at all. Why did they not freeze?

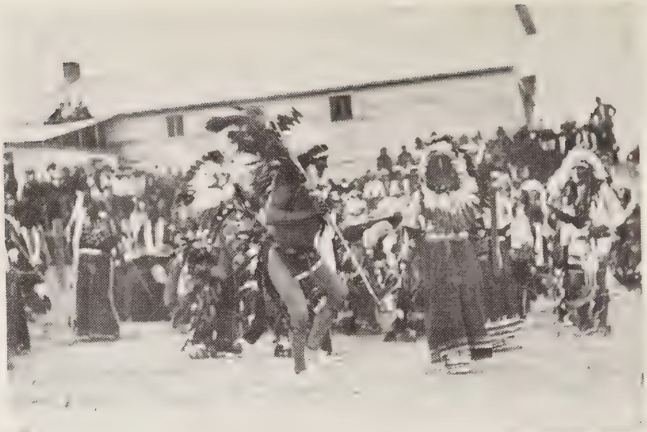
The women had a peculiar style of dress. These dresses fitted very loosely. The sleeves were a little more than elbow length, very full and on the under side sewed only part way to the end. This made it very convenient for a mother to nurse her baby. Just pull back the sleeve, bring the baby's mouth into position and everything was all set. What could be more utilitarian? There was also a V-shaped extension on each side that touched the ground. Fashions did not change very much or very fast. One or two buttons at the top held the dress together at the back. These dresses were so full that a woman could put on a number of them at the same time. When this was done, each dress was just a little shorter than the one under it so it was possible to count the number of dresses that a woman was wearing.

The Lakotas I knew were great gamblers, most all of them, but the women seemed to be the worst. They had a game they called "Shooting plum seeds." (Kansu kute iskati, by a logical transfer of meaning from the association of ideas, this is also what they called play-



**Blackpipe Creek Day School; John B. Tripp, teacher; Emelina Tripp, housekeeper. Taken in 1894. Names of Pupils: First row** (all kneeling)—Albert Punch Him, Earnest Quick Bear, Ruth Little Chief, Mollie Blue Bird, Abram Horned Antelope, Jesse Charging in the Timber, Henry Eagle Bear, Joe Weeds Father. **Second row** (1 girl standing; 3 boys sitting; 2 girls standing) — Myra Good Thunder, Frank Eagle Horn, Rex Charging Bear, John Bull Walks Behind, Jenny Porcupine, Hattie Charging Bear. **Third row** (all standing, girl, boy, 3 girls, 4 boys) — Charles Weeds Father, Mary Eagle Bear, Lucy Charging Bear, Allie Skunk, Henry Charging Bear, James Red Weasel, Patrick Yellow Bird, Emmet Eagle Bear. **Last row** — Anna Tripp, Mrs. Tripp, Ida Charging in the Timber, Annie Little Chief, Mittie Quick Bear, Grover Red Weasel, Silas Quick Bear, Zander Big Crow, Policeman (name unknown), John B. Tripp, Sr.

Old Day School at Black Pipe where Mr. and Mrs. John Tripp taught.



Dancers in front of DeBell Store, Rosebud, 1890's

Miss Kline, nurse at Roesbud Boarding School

Mrs. Morris at back. Her husband was Agency Doctor in 1890's.

Lydia Wetzel, teacher at Rosebud Boarding School, 1898

ing cards. No doubt they still do.) In this game they had a number of plum pits with flats cut on them. These were shaken up in a small container and tossed out, very much like "shooting dice."

A friend of mine told me that he once saw some women playing this game. One of them was a steady loser and was taking off one dress after another and staking it. He said that he was too modest to wait and see how the game ended. I have known of women gambling their rations away. The family would go extra hungry, no doubt until next ration day or perhaps they could visit the winner.

Indian housekeeping was very primitive. A few pots and pans, a few tin plates, a few knives, maybe a fork or two, some tin cups and a frying pan. That was about all except the articles for doing bead work, which would be an awl, some sinew, thread and a few needles no doubt. No one that I knew had a sewing machine. They all had wood burning stoves in their houses. So far as I know, they seldom or never did any baking unless it was some baking powder biscuits. When living in tents all the cooking was done over an open fire—boiled, fried or barbecued. The household furniture would be a chair or two, perhaps one bed with bed rolls for the children, numerous storage boxes and bundles (oshua). All in all, the housekeeping chores were very light. I have heard Mother say that she was the hardest working woman in camp. She was absolutely right.

The women and older girls did some very nice bead work. Also some porcupine quill work. All the beads were imported from Europe.

All of the older people did a lot of face painting. Both men and women. Some always had paint on, others only occasionally. Sometimes they put paint on the children also. When the men were in dancing costumes they had their bodies well adorned with various colors. A lot of this was red or yellow ocher which they got in the Badlands. Some was Diamond dye bought at the store. Perhaps, too, they used some type of plants.

A favorite ornament was elk teeth. Many of these were later sold to the Elks Lodge members. Sometimes they would make imitation elk teeth out of shin bones and sell it as the real article. I have not the slightest doubt that many of these counterfeits are now being worn by palefaces. (Can't you hear them say, sure it is genuine, didn't I buy it from the Indians who killed the elk?)

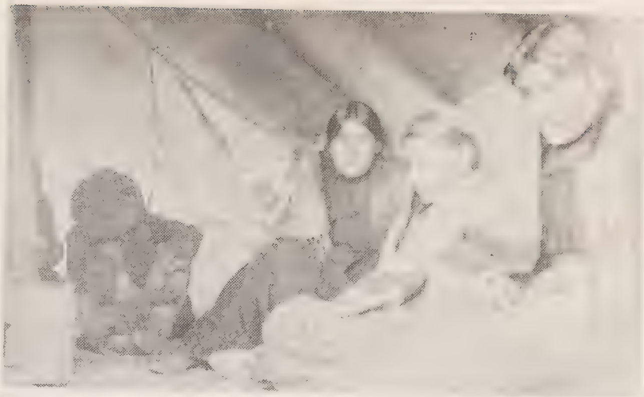
The most valuable asset a Lakota man had was his ponies. He was proud of these and took reasonably good care of them. That means he knew where they were most of the time. This does not mean that the ponies were stabled during the winter months or given very much feed during that time. They had to rustle their own food during the entire year and get what shelter they could during storms. Sometimes a man would build a small stable, big enough for two or three ponies at a time. For some reason or another, they did not take very much interest in raising cattle, either for themselves or as hired hands for the White ranchers north of the river. As I mentioned before, there were no White ranchers on the Reserve at that time. Down at the Eastern end, Issac Battleyoung, a mixed blood, had a pasture by 1905. Perhaps some of the others of his type did also.

A custom that probably is no more was the "courting blanket." This was usually made of heavy woolen cloth, beaded perhaps. A young "Buck" would catch the girl and throw the blanket around both of them. Then they would stand, sometimes for hours, out in the hot sun. Presumably, he would be whispering sweet nothings into her ear or maybe singing her a love song.

The afternoon or evening that we arrived at Black Pipe, Colonel Scraper came to see us. He stayed for supper. Next morning he called again, before breakfast, and had a friend or two with him. Ditto for dinner and supper. This went on for a few days, each day the delegation grew larger and it began to look as though the job of feeding the camp went with the teaching set up. Mother was all worried and rightly so. About this time Mr. Eaton from Corn Creek called. He had been the teacher there before the uprising and knew the ropes. He explained the facts of Reservation life and told Father and Mother that unless they wished to be a free lunch counter to all and sundry, they would have to call a halt on free hand outs. This they did and from then on there was no crowding. It did seem hard at first not to feed a hungry person who was on hand at meal time. But there was no other way to handle it. It was O. K. with the natives.

This Colonel Scraper was quite a character. He knew a few English words and made them do for all occasions. When dressed up, he wore an old cavalry overcoat and, I think, a soldier's belt with sword and scabbard. He had the "shakes" badly. Among his prized possessions were some character testimonials. One of these was to the effect that he was an honest man because he had been arrested several times for horse stealing and could never be proven guilty. He liked that one best because it had been given to him by his friend, an army officer.

Another character was a little shriveled up fellow and his specialty was begging. He was from Corn Creek. He would start asking for something big and he would keep tapering down. If he could get nothing else he would be satisfied with a match. He had quite a repertoire of English swear words. (He must have spent some time around an army post.) Sometimes after he had been begging quite a while the White person would say, "Well, Wooden Knife, let's hear you swear and I will give you something." He always obliged and both were happy.



**On Rosebud Reservation, 1892.**
**Interior of Indian tent.**

In reference to talking English that was something that very few would do even if they could. There was a young Lakota woman at Corn Creek who had been away to school and could speak as well as the average White but would not. Also at Corn Creek, there was a man with sandy hair and a red beard. He was called Steve Murray, he claimed to be an Indian but certainly was not. He must have been taken into the tribe as a baby. Most of those who had been away at Carlisle or other schools, "went back to the blanket" as soon as they returned home.

The only exception at Black Pipe was Reuben Quick Bear. He wore his hair short, dressed like White men and in other ways tried to be progressive. I understand that at one time he started a small school for some of the camp boys.

In those days, English speaking people were so scarce that whenever two of us met on the road, we always stopped our horses and talked for a spell. If a White person was caught by nightfall near a school house, the proper thing to do, was to stay all night. Payment was always refused if offered. Black Pipe School was the half way house between the nearest railroad at Cody, Nebr., and the ranches along the other side of the Big White River. Even so, we would not average one such visit per month. Distances, measured by time, were much greater in those days than now. Horseback was the fastest mode of travel.

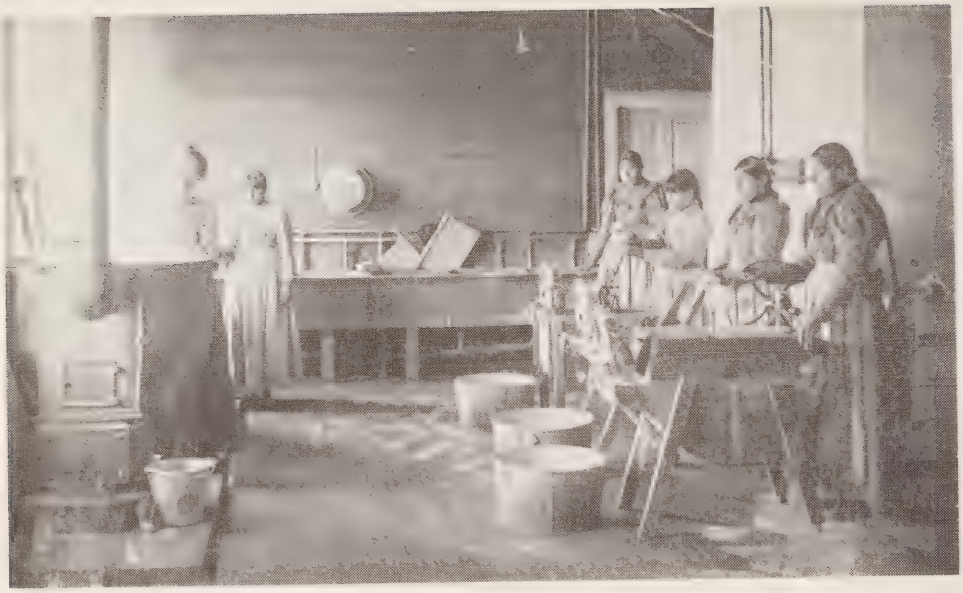
A Lakota family traveling was sometimes quite a caravan. First would be a light wagon drawn by two ponies. The man driving, his wife might be sitting with him, more likely though she would be back in the wagon box sitting on some hay. Mounted on ponies might be two or three older children, trailing along would be several dogs and a number of loose ponies. The outfit was self-contained and could make camp anywhere near water. In case of absolute necessity a "dry" camp could be made.

Around 1900, the Government started a policy of giving the people work and paying them for it. Some of the work was building dams, they also improved some of the main roads and put in fire guards. Before that, if a prairie fire once started, it had to almost burn itself out. It seemed to me that sometimes they would burn for weeks.

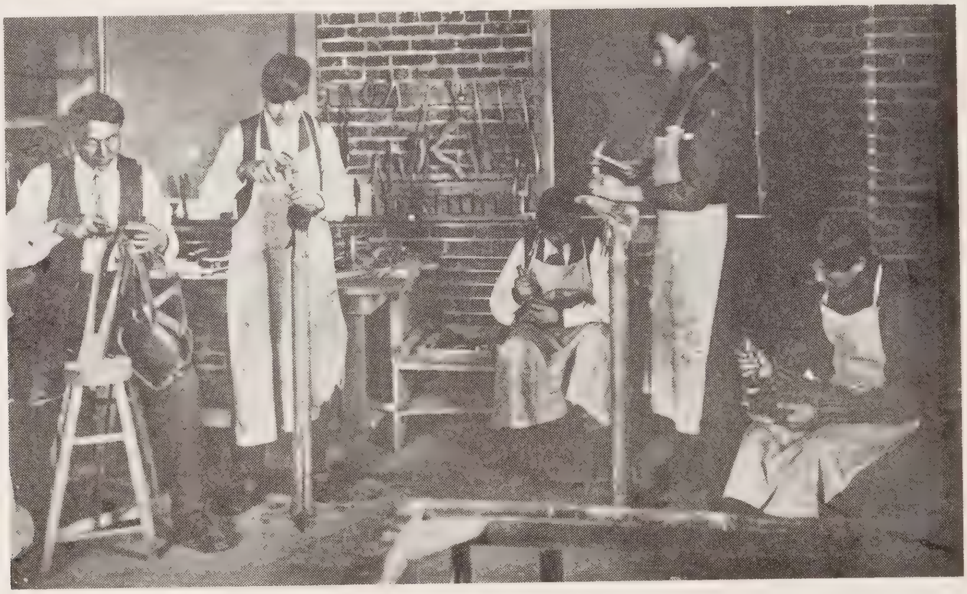
And could some of those old-timers tell tall stories! Cold weather was one of the things they used to brag about. They really let themselves go! Sam Terry was a White man who had lived among the Sioux for a long, long time. He specialized in cold weather yarns. Here is one I heard him tell:

# ROSEBUD BOARDING SCHOOL SCENES BEFORE 1905

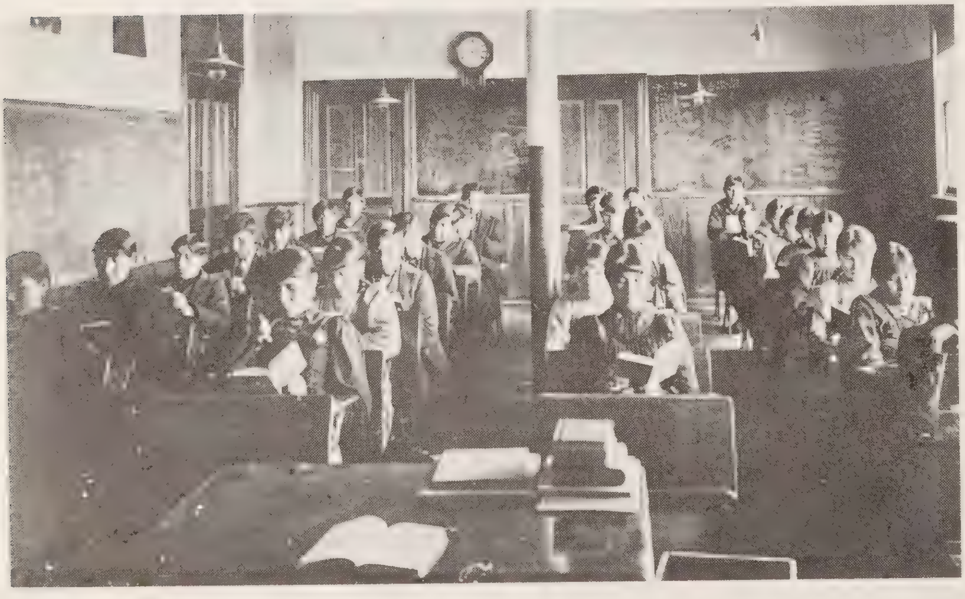
(From J. B. Tripp, Jr.)



Above:
Steam Laundry



At Right:
Shoe Shop



Upper Grades

Girls Dormitory

Barns and I. D. Stock

Kitchen help at Rosebud Boarding School.
Mrs. Tripp, in charge, seated at right.

It seems that one winter, there had been an issue of beef on hoof, and they got ready to butcher. One man had his rifle ready to shoot the steer and the others had their knives ready to do the skinning. The rifleman shot and the steer dropped. The others leaped to do the skinning but before they could reach the carcass it had frozen solid.

This same Sam, came into the store one day and told us that he had killed, or rather tried to kill, an enormous snake. According to his story, this rattlesnake must have been about the size of a python or a boa, at least. It seems that he made a pass at it with a hoe but missed. The snake bit the hoe handle and before Sam could make a second pass at the snake, according to Sam's story, the hoe handle swelled to the size of a log and dropped out of his hand. While he was looking for something made of iron, to try again, the snake got away.

Some of the old time White men did not set a very good example of sobriety. One day, one of them was telling of a very big snake he had just killed. He did not have any weapon, not even a rope, but fortunately he did have a partly filled whiskey bottle. He finished that off, threw the empty bottle at the snake and killed it. He said, "If you doubt my word go and look." Someone did just that and found the empty bottle, and—a piece of rope!

The Lakotas as I knew them, were a happy-go-lucky, rather improvident people. Shinny was one of their favorite sports. It was camp against camp and no player limit. The older women would usually take a position at their side's goal, to set and gossip until such a time as the ball might come their way. Then they would try to block. The young women and children made up the gallery. Always there was a lot of betting.

Children played about the same games that Whites do. The boys often played with bows and arrows but their elders did not do any hunting with them. In fact, they did very little hunting of any kind or fishing. The natural product that they used the most was chokecherries. They gathered these by the bushel and pounded them between two stones as they probably still do. In the spring they would dig a lot of "Indian turnips," peel them, braid the roots together in long strings and save them for later on. Once in a while, they would have a small field of squaw corn, or maybe a few pumpkin vines. They would cut the pumpkins into strips and dry them, also any extra beef might be "jerked" and saved for a while. In the camp schools the children were served a "lunch" of two hard-tacks and a cup of sweentened black coffee. During the wintertime that was the biggest meal that some of them got. At the time I did not realize it, but now I feel sure that some of those people were often hungry.

The birth rate was rather high, so was infant mortality. The population was gradually increasing. Twin births must have been very rare as I do not remember ever hearing of one. However a Cut Meat woman gave birth to quads while I was there. All were boys and none lived.

Father was Connecticut Yankee and could turn his hand to almost anything. While at Black Pipe (later he was Superintendent at the boarding school), he was more or less head man. The people used to go to him for advice on all sorts of things. Among other things, he pulled teeth. He had that one pair of dental forceps and made them do for any tooth that was to be pulled. He pulled them without benefit of any anesthetic—pulled them "raw" as the expression goes. How it must have hurt!

There were of course, Lakota medicine-men who used various herbs, etc. It seemed to me, that each one claimed to have the spirit of some animal, such as the coyote, to guide him. I have been sorry many times that I did not make a study of the customs and language when I had the chance. It simply never occurred to me to do so. While at the Day School, Father gave very strict orders (properly so) to us children not to talk Lakota with the camp children. He said that he

Saw Mill Near Rosebud, 1892

**Store and Home in Cut Meat**
**(now Parmelee, S. D.)**

was there to teach them our ways and not for us to learn their's.

While working in the store, I could talk about any of the stock, but to carry on a general conversation was beyond me. It seemed odd that there were so very few good interpreters even among the mixed bloods. In other words, very few who could talk both languages. I once saw a man, who had been married to a Lakota woman for years, call in an interpreter to talk to his own six or seven year old son.

While Mr. Parmelee was on the "Big Round-up" (1902) my brother Perry was sent to the Cut Meat store to help me. One day he found a mouse nest with a litter of very young mice. They were so young, that their eyes were not yet open. It so happened that Eagle Pipe, one of the older men, was in the store. He said, "Let me have those mice and I will show you that I am a wicha wakan, a Holy man" (perhaps a magician would be nearer the meaning). He took the baby mice, popped them into his mouth, one at a time. He went through the motions of swallowing with each one, very much as a person might do with grapes. When the mice were all gone, he opened his mouth and had us look to see that they were not there. "Now," said he "I will show you that I am a Wicha Wakan." With that, he regurgitated the mice, one at a time and laid them out on his hand again. "Now," he said, "You know that I am a Wicha Wakan." At that time it did not effect my stomach, but it might now. I do not recall now, but I suppose we gave him a little something to eat or a bag of smoking tobacco. That would have been the proper thing to do.

The word, "Wakan," often translated "Holy," really stands for anything they did not understand. "Mini Wakan" was hard liquors. "Muza Wakan," a gun of any kind. "Shunka Wakan" a horse. They did not know what horses were at first. "Wakan Tanka" the Great Mystery or God. To them, God is a supreme mystery, just as He is to all of us, for that matter.

Bear Old Woman—I suppose that "Mato Winohca," really means, "Old She Bear"; it is an example of poor translating—anyway, he came into the Cut Meat store one day very much agitated. He was not exactly scared White but very near it. "What is the trouble my friend?" asked Mr. Parmelee. He answered, "You know that prairie dog town just over the hill? Well, as I was riding by it just now, I saw a prairie dog Chief or Boss (Spispiza Itanchan) and it is very bad to see one of them." "What is a prairie dog Boss?" asked Mr. Parmelee. "That I do not know, except that it is a prairie dog Boss and it is very bad to see one." Neither Mr. Parmelee nor I had ever heard of such a thing before and tried to find out more. That was all he either could or would tell us. Evidently the subject was "Wakan," for that is the only time I ever heard it referred to.

Mr. Parmelee tried to calm Mr. B. O. W. down, by telling him that just seeing the Boss surely would not hurt him. Mr. P. said, "I would not be afraid to look at it. I am sure it would not hurt me." The Indian said, "Well, maybe it would not hurt a White man but it certainly will hurt a Lakota." Mr. Parmelee offered to go with him to the dog town and have a look. When he left the store to go home, Bear Old Woman took the long way around so as not to run any further risk. A few months later, Mr. Parmelee had a mild case of diphtheria and I am sure that our friend laid it to his poohing of the "Chief." Also sometime later this man's wife was standing by the stove in their house during a thunderstorm. A bolt of lightning struck the protruding stove-pipe, came down into the house and killed her.

We later found out from Jack Whipple more about the strange animal. He said that he had seen it and thought it to be some kind of a ferret that preyed on the dogs. That is exactly what it is, apparently.

One of our main problems in the store was to keep the natives from over-buying on credit. Most of them would buy and buy if they could have things charged. "Ecazo" they called it. I think, that they did not mean to be dishonest in the least. They simply took a rosy view of life and would pay later. One day, when Mr. Parmelee was away on some trip and I was alone in the store, a well known Lakota man came in. He talked for a while, then started to order supplies. I was congratulating myself on getting such a nice sale. After he had everything out on the counter that he wanted, he said; "Ecazo!" That is; charge it. I told him that he did not have an account with us and that I could not open one. He lived way down on Spring Creek quite a ways from Cut Meat. Said he; "You need not be afraid to write it down for me. My credit is good everywhere. At Browns' store over across the creek, I owe a lot of money. Down at the Agency in Short Charlie's (Jordan's) store I have a big account. The same at Red Head's store. (DeBells, who also owned the Cut Meat store and the one at Oak Creek.) Down at Valentine and at Crookston I owe a lot more, my credit is good everywhere. You need not be afraid to write it down for me." That was his argument or rather his logic. He was perfectly sincere too. I doubt if any of these accounts were worth half a cent to the dollar.

At that time there was no way of making these people pay a bill unless they wanted to. They were wards of the Government and it was a case of "let the seller beware." Every store that did any trusting must have mountains of bad, uncollectable bills. For this reason, prices had to be high. The standard markup was double the invoice price. Freight charges on heavy goods was quite an item, too, as everything had to be freighted in from the railroad towns.

Sometimes the Lakota men would have more than one wife. At Black Pipe there were two such cases, Quick Bear with three and Little Chief with two. Each wife had a house of her own.

When getting married Lakota style, the couple simply ran off together. They eloped we would call it, but with this difference, the man was supposed to have stolen the girl and compelled her to go with him against her will. The relatives of the bride would make all kinds of threats against the man, as to what they would do when he got back. This was all window dressing, nothing ever came of it. Married this way, either party could "epeya" (throw away) the other at will and that ended it. There was one couple at Black Pipe who did this fairly often. The churches of course, frowned on these native marriages and in later years there was always a church wedding. Most of the older couples never went through the church rites.

The main reason why the Lakotas were so slow in changing their ways was, I think, that they liked their way better. They had a great pride of their race. Not one, that I knew, would have wanted to be of any other race. The same with the mixed-bloods. A little mixed-blood girl was once telling one of my sisters, about her sister who was going to marry a white man. She said, "But he is a very nice White man, nearly as good as a mixed-blood."

And lest I forget, the Government employees were paid once in three months.

The first year at Black Pipe, we four older children attended school with the camp kids. Perry was not yet of school age. The school year of 1892-93, Charles and I were back at the White Lake high school. There were two teachers and all grades. Then we, Charles and I, went to the Fremont Normal School, now Midland college. I attended there until the summer of 1900, with only summer vacations at Rosebud, then was back at White Lake with Charles, on the old farm, with sheep that Father had bought to start us off. At that time, we could rent a whole quarter section of land, for hay or grazing for ten dollars per year. Sheep raising did not interest me too much and I wrote to Mr. DeBell about a job in his store. At that time, he only had the one at the Rosebud Agency. Later, he built at Cut Meat and bought one at Oak Creek. When the job was available, I took it and worked in all three stores at various times. I was manager at Oak Creek for a while, then was at Cut Meat with Mr. Parmelee. Finer people never lived than he and his wife Mary.

Anna, Emma and Perry Tripp in 1892

It was about then that the new machine, Horseless Wagon, Horseless Carriage, Motor Car, Gasoline Motor Car, Motor Carriage, Rigs that Run, Gasmobile, Gasoline Car, Motor Buggy, Motor Vehicle, Auto Car, Automobile or what have you, was first being promoted to any extent. No name had been standardized and each new maker tried to have one that would describe his product and attract the cash of the buying public.

I answered every advertisement that I saw and wrote for catalogues. From the mountain of literature thus obtained, I decided that the White Steamer, was the most reliable and best for my purpose. So, having made arrangements by mail... "Sometime in the morning of July 4th, 1905, I boarded the stage coach in front of the DeBell store (operated now in 1961, by T. V. Paulhamus) at the Rosebud Agency, enroute to the White Sewing Machine Company in Cleveland, Ohio, to learn about AUTOMOBILES!" ———

And thus I left the Rosebud Reservation.

# Turner's Homestead Days in Mellette County

### By Helen S. Turner

What do I remember about homestead days? Those glorious, those awful days! Only those who enjoyed them, and suffered through them, can appreciate that seeming contradiction. I do not mean to imply that there was any great hardship. If there was, I did not hear of it. But there were lonesome days, especially for the women, and terrible anxiety when sickness occurred. I for one, loved the rolling hills, clear skies and beautiful sunrises and sunsets. I know also that my husband loved that country. If after death, our spirits are allowed to return to our old haunts, I am sure his spirit would be roaming those old hills, over which he liked to ride his horse with his dogs following.

My husband, Arthur Turner, was a carpenter raised and trained in England. I was born and educated in Sioux City, Iowa. We met when I, a teacher, boarded at the home of his brother, a farmer. The brother persuaded us to try farming so we moved to his, the brother's farm at Wessington Springs, S. D. When we heard that "Uncle Sam" was offering "free" farms in Mellette County we decided to try for one. In the drawing of chances I believe our number was 721, but Art filed on a much lower number because so many registrants dropped out. He filed on NE 14 41-28 late in April 1912. He returned to Wessington Springs where we had our goods packed and ready to move.

We went by train to Murdo—Art by freight with our emigrant car, I, with the two children aged four and two and one-half years, by passenger train. We were all held up for two days at Chamberlain because of the burning wreck of a gasoline tank train near Presho. We arrived in Murdo in the evening of May 6.

The two horses and two cows were unloaded at the stockyards that night. The next morning Arthur located a man with a team and wagon to help unload and haul our things. The loading of the wagons consumed more than half a day, so we started out after noon. Both wagons were piled to the top of triple boxes. The two cows were tied behind one wagon and the single buggy, with the children and I aboard, behind the other. This arrangement soon proved impractical as the cows refused to lead—just laid down! Arthur had to walk and prod them along. I climbed to the seat of one high load, (to me a terrifying height) to drive the team. One child was tied to the seat beside me and the other beside the other driver.

Thus we made our slow way to Westover, which we reached after dark. People who lived there beside the bridge accommodated travelers and we applied for lodging for the night. All their beds were full so we shared the living-room floor with Mr. and Mrs. Frank Perry and their six year old son Ralph. While our pallets were being prepared we were somewhat dismayed, but also amused, to hear the landlady call upstairs to her helper, "Mary, Mary, have we any sheets that have just been used once?" We did not hear the reply and were too tired to care greatly.

At that time the road from Westover to White River was just a dirt wagon trail and it was necessary to ford the Little White River twice. For those crossings the teams had to be doubled and the wagons taken across, one at a time. When the cows came to the water, one just let out a bellow, lay down, and her feet came up. I was sure she would be drowned but she seemed none the worse. While walking about with the children at one crossing, I found a cigarette lighter beside an old camp fire. This lighter proved a life saver later. At the Ben Hungry Hill near White River the teams were again doubled up. That day the sun beat down, temperature rose to an unseasonable high. We were unprepared for the heat and really suffered from heat and sunburn.

We arrived at White River just before dark. The town was swarming with people of all sorts, settlers arriving to take up residence; anxious registrants waiting their turn to file, and Indians. The children and I found lodging at a large frame rooming house run by a Mr. and Mrs. Peters and their two pretty daughters. Of White River, the town, at that time I remember: A livery stable run by Mr. Stone; a store and Post Office run by Jesse Brown; John Hight's store; and a restaurant behind a pool hall owned by Mr. Patnoe.

On the morning of May 9 we shopped for supplies and then set out east for our homestead. That road, really just a trail, was precarious in spots, especially crossing the dry creek bed below Red Shirt Dam. As we approached the Little Badlands I became more and more concerned about the nature of this land but we emerged on the other side to see rolling hills covered with deep, waving grass and between the hills, wooded draws.

Surprisingly Arthur was able to locate one corner stake and we entered our land at about four o'clock. Clouds were gathering threateningly so we hurried to set up our tent (12 x 14) and get as much as possible undercover before it became wet. The perishables were stacked in the tent, wagons covered as best we could; horses and cattle staked out; and we all took refuge just as the rain became heavy. We spent a crowded night, but were thankful to be dry. We had brought along a gasoline stove and at White River had bought gasoline, but woe of woes, no matches. Now, due to the alertness of our hired drivers, the cigarette lighter saved the day. He filled it with gasoline and it worked. Neither Arthur nor I were familiar with one.

The next morning the freighter left. The rain was over. Arthur settled the camp somewhat and hauled a barrel of water from Albert Wolford's well a half mile to the north. Until this time we had relied on water from jugs filled from dams and at White River.

Albert Wolford was our first acquaintance in our new home. He had drawn a low number and immediately after filing had built a shack and had a well dug. He was about 21 and from West Virginia. I believe Pete Petersen was the next neighbor we met. He was a young Dane who had been in Omaha for a few months after coming to America. Then came John Glatfelter from Decatur, Ill., and Gus Kylen, a Swede who had been some years in Missouri. He was a little older than most of the "boys." I am not sure of the order in which others came but there were, that summer of 1912, also the two Staat boys, John and Neal, who came originally from Holland; Charles Kerlin, Frank Jarboe, who hailed from Kansas, and a young fellow named Roach. Albert Moorhouse arrived late that summer to file on the quarter section south of ours. Later when regulations were changed increasing homestead allotments to 320 acres, Al relinquished that quarter to Art and Al filed on the one directly south. As Al had also come from England, he and Art became close friends.

I believe I was the first woman resident of our township. I did not hear of any others until that fall.

We did not undertake any building until ground was broken and about 12 acres of corn planted, also potatoes and garden. Fences had to be built to contain our livestock and to protect our little field from range stock of which hundreds of head ranged the prairie.

One important job was locating our corner stakes, one of which was quite elusive. While engaged in this pursuit I stepped on a coiled rattlesnake which struck out, missing me, but struck the dog which followed. The dog was quite sick for a day or two but recovered and from then on whenever he encountered a rattler he gave the alarm with a peculiar howl.

Many trips to Murdo were necessary to get building supplies, barbed wire, etc. Those trips consumed two long days. Usually two neighbors would make these trips so teams could be doubled when necessary. Pete Petersen with his team of mules often accompanied Art. Also Arthur spent many days cutting and hauling fence posts from Little White River bottom land. The Indians were allowed to sell some trees from their land. I believe the Indian with whom Art dealt was White Buffalo. By cutting the trees himself Art could get, for ten cents each, poles that cut into two posts. Pete Petersen and John Glatfelter sometimes made these trips with Art.

While we lived in the tent we had no means of locking up so it seemed advisable not to leave the campsite unguarded. Consequently, I did not go to town until the Fourth of July and in all that time I did not even see a woman. On the third of July we moved most of our things into a floorless shack 16 x 16 which was to be a barn later. We continued to sleep in the tent until about the first of October.

On that Fourth of July I am not sure whether the

Turners, February 1914

town of White River had planned a celebration. My own remembrance is of just a crowd. The only women I recall meeting that day were Mrs. John Hight and Mrs. Jim Mitchell. The Mitchells lived several miles south of us. They were not homesteaders, having bought Indian land before the country was opened. Indians could sell certain inherited land.

Aside from lack of female companionship, that summer was a happy one, especially in retrospect. On Sundays some of our neighbors would drop in, sometimes with quite novel conveyances. The Staat boys had only one pony so they hitched it to one end of a ladder, thus they glided over the prairie grass.

One Sunday in June Art turned the teams loose with harness on to graze while we ate dinner. Pete Petersen was eating with us and after dinner the men sat talking and watching the horses as they moved, grazing, up the hill. When the horses neared the top of the hill Art and Pete started after them, not hurrying. When they reached the hill top they were amazed to find the horses had disappeared. Pete had walked to our place but hurried home and returned with his mules which they hitched to the buggy and set out on a search which lasted until Wednesday night. They followed many false trails but finally found the horses at a farm bordering the stock yards at Murdo where we had unloaded them on our arrival there. We were sure we had found that supposedly rare individual, an honest man, for that farmer had removed the harness and kept it safe in his barn.

One day while Art was gone on the hunt for the horses I started to prepare lunch for the children and myself. I had just put the coffee pot on when my little daughter came running into the tent saying "Mama, there is a big Indian out here. He took the saddle off and put a long rope on his horse." I did not know what to think of this, but stepped outside. The Indian came over near the tent, helped himself to one of the chairs and said "Drink." I showed him the water barrel and gave him a cup. He sat down again and then said "You got coffee?" Then it dawned on me that he was hungry, so I invited him in to eat with us. He told me he also was searching for lost horses and went on his way. This was my first contact with an Indian and I must say that, contrary to some things we heard, in all our dealings with them we had no complaints.

Later that summer settlers increased fast including Jim Hardy, Homer Wilson, Mr. Palmer and his two sons George and Harry. In September Pete Petersen went to Omaha and married his sweetheart who had also come from Denmark. Thus she was the second woman in our immediate area. We remained close friends as long as we remained in the county.

One snowy morning early in October, Lige Graham brought his wife and little son to share our fireside. They had come in a covered wagon to construct a house and the unseasonable snow storm had caught them unaware. Needless to say, I was happy to meet her and so began a friendship which has lasted to this day. I visited them in Yakima, Wash., a year ago.

Also that fall a Mr. and Mrs. Moore and little daughter moved to land between our place and Pete Petersen's. Mrs. Moore was a daughter of Mrs. Palmer. Two more Palmer boys and their wives arrived, Jake to a mile or two north of his father's place and William east from Frank Jarboe's place.

Our house was finished in October and from then on we often had as overnight guests, people who were looking for locations.

So far there had been no social life so when word went round that one of the bachelors had brought home a wife and that we were to gather for a charivari, the suggestion was welcomed. Mr. and Mrs. Petersen accompanied Art and I. There were present several of the single boys and a Mr. and Mrs. Greenwalt from a few miles north of us. The "bride and groom" invited us in and served us sandwiches and coffee. Any constraint on their part seemed only natural. Sometime later we learned that our charivari was premature!

That winter was mild except for a cold spell about the first of 1913. When warm days returned we thought spring had come but on the 12th of March a blizzard struck and lasted three days with heavy snow and wind of hurricane force. I had no conception of the fierceness of the storm so when Art returned to the house after an inspection of the stock, and said our six half-grown pigs were in danger of being buried in snow and suffocated, I volunteered to go and help rescue them. As soon as we left the shelter of the house and I met the full force of the wind I was sorry I had come. I could not see Art in front of me though I was holding to his coat. We got all but one pig from their pen and into the barn. I was becoming anxious about the children alone in the house so Art set out to get some corn from the fodder stack with which to coax within reach, the pig that had escaped. He said he

**Picnic at the Lige Graham home in 1921**

would drop by the house to check on the children. This necessitated his traveling in a triangular course with sides roughly fifty, fifty and one hundred feet. I crawled in the barn window to wait his return and imagined him losing his way, myself stranded in the barn and my little ones alone in the house. But, wonder of wonders, he returned, reported the children safe, we caught the pig and returned safely to the house.

When the storm was over it was found that many, many head of range stock had perished. Having sought shelter in the wooded draws or gullies, they became buried in snow, and smothered.

Early in the spring of 1913 families began to arrive. Among those who settled near us were Mr. and Mrs. Tom Gallagher and three children; Mr. and Mrs. Houseman and three children; Mr. and Mrs. Noah Gerig; Mr. and Mrs. Karl Sorensen, with three children; Mr. and Mrs. Charles Sjoholm and teen-age daughter; Mr. and Mrs. Frank Tisdell and little daughter. A young woman, Marie Fox was also an early arrival north and west from us. In that area also were the Pesicks, the Ray Briggs, Mr. and Mrs. Arch Maxwell, Mr. and Mrs. Jake Scholl and John Endes. North from us I remember the John Sykoras who had a large family and the Barcals, Smiths, and Eglestons. Frank Jarboe's parents came to live on land adjoining his. South from us and somewhat west were Bismark Nollsch and wife, the John Gretschmanns, Mr. and Mrs. Groom, Mrs. Groom's mother and the MacDonalds with several children. To the south were Chas. Wagner and George Schanberg, bachelors.

The Grooms and her mother had filed on adjoining homesteads and built their houses close together. Mrs. Groom started a Sunday School in the winter or early spring of 1913. The classes were held in the two adjacent houses. I did not attend the earliest sessions as I was expecting my third child. Among the first superintendents, I remember Jas. Mitchell and Chas. Wagner. Soon arrangements were made to have church services, with Rev. Van Valkenburgh in charge. He was a Congregational minister and was taking a homestead west of White River.

In the fall of 1914 the meeting place was changed to the house on Mr. Palmer, Sr.'s homestead. Mr. Palmer had proved up and left. His house was being used by the Happy Hollow School. When the school building was erected in 1915 the Sunday School and church services were held there until the church was built. The records have been lost but my recollection is that formal organization of the church body was in the summer of 1915. Someone had procured a large tent for the occasion. It was set up on the land at the northeast corner of the section.

A picnic dinner was held and under Rev. Van Valkenburgh's direction a constitution and by-laws drawn up, and officers elected. Though several church denominations were represented, we became a Congregational Church out of courtesy to Rev. Van Valkenburgh who braved all kinds of weather and roads to serve us. I was the first clerk and kept the records for some years.

After organizing we began to plan for a building. In the summer of 1916 plans were completed and with John Glatfelter in charge and everyone giving of their time and labor the building was completed. It was the first church built in Mellette County for white people and by white people. For several years it was the center of social life in our community. The Ladies Aid society was formed and the meetings were real events in our neighborhood for a few years.

After Rev. Van Valkenburgh left the county, Rev. J. E. Robinson came directly from England to be pastor of White River Congregational Church and to serve Happy Hollow also. He is now in retirement in Arizona. I had the pleasure of seeing him again last summer when we both attended a reunion at a church at Wessington Springs where he had been pastor 35 years ago.

The first child born in our immediate part of the county was a girl born to Mr. and Mrs. Moore in April or May 1913. On the 27th of June my daughter Beth was born, and in July Mrs. Petersen had a baby girl.

The first wedding I recall was that of Jim Hardy and Mathilda Schwartz in the spring of 1914. I do not know where the ceremony was held but Jim held a celebration at his homestead for all their friends. I was not present as I had taken my baby to a hospital in Sioux City for surgery. I think the next marriage in our community was that of Chas. Wagner and Helga Sjoholm in 1915.

In 1915 Art and some of the neighbors set out a variety of fruit trees. Ours consisted of several kinds of apples, cherries, plums, gooseberries, raspberries and mulberries. The latter were supposed to be to keep birds from bothering the more desirable fruits but we enjoyed them because they were first to start bearing. All the fruit did well and after a few years we had some good crops of apples.

Wild plums, grapes, chokecherries, and buffalo berries were plentiful. There were several varieties of wild plums, some so bitter as to be useless, others the largest and most delicious I have ever seen. Everyone had their own ways of using the wild fruit. I used it to make a bright red jelly of equal parts of ripe chokecherries and green grapes. This jelled so much better than the cherries alone.

We raised lots of watermelons and muskmelons. I made from them pickles, preserves and of the muskmelons a sort of butter flavored with lemon or cinnamon. We also tried a melon like fruit called garden peach. It was rather tasteless but I made sauce of them by cooking them in grape juice and adding sugar.

One year when watermelons were abundant, I disliked seeing them go to waste so I tried making syrup by boiling down the juice. I produced a quite palatable syrup of a golden color. The red had all come out as scum, as it boiled. Since it required about ten quarts of juice to make one of syrup, I decided the product was not worth the labor. I thought this idea was original with me but years later I read in one of Bess Streeter Aldrich's novels of early days in Nebraska that one of her characters had the same idea.

The first school in our district, called Happy Hollow, was opened in September 1913. The name, which became associated with both the church and school, originated with Miss Grace Brown whose homestead was south from ours but I am not sure of the location. That year the school was held in Gus Kylen's homestead "shack." Mr. Kylen had proved up and returned to his home in Missouri. The building was a typical "shack," 12 x 12 or 12 x 14. The seats and desks were home-made.

There were ten pupils, namely, Naomi and Clark Gallagher, Mathilda and Elizabeth Sorensen, Edward

**Happy Hollow School, 1914-15.** Clair Moyer, teacher. Pupils: **Back row,** left to right: Elizabeth and Mathilda Sorensen, Clark and Naomi Gallagher, Ruth Houseman. **Front row:** William Sorensen, Garnett Turner, Winifred Turner, and Vyvenne Tisdell.

and Orville Anderson, Winifred Turner, and Nellie, Ruth and Ward Houseman. The teacher was Miss Anna Bramer, an Iowa girl. She boarded at my house until the Christmas vacation during which she was married to John Falk, who was employed at one of the banks in White River. For the remainder of the school term they rented the house on the Lawrence Rassmussen place west from the school.

The next year the school was moved to a larger house on land homesteaded by Mr. Palmer, Sr. in section 10 41-28 but I am not sure which quarter. Miss Ella Bramer taught until Christmas time when she left to marry a Mr. Sumner. Mr. Clair Moyer finished the year and boarded at the Chas. Sjoholm home on NW quarter of section 15. The pupils were Naomi and Clark Gallagher, Ruth Houseman, Mathilda, Elizabeth and William Sorensen, Vyvenne Tisdell, Winifred and Garnett (Bud) Turner.

In 1915 a school building was built on the SE quarter of section 11. That year Mrs. E. Graham was the efficient teacher. The pupils were the same as the year before.

Some later teachers I remember were Mary Magirl, a Miss Lent, Viola Bucholz, Ethel Phillips, Mrs. Helen Durman, Mame Miller, Ernest Hamilton, Mrs. Carmichael and Mrs. Frank Burke, whose husband bought our place after we moved to Pierre.

It is hard to put into words one's feelings about those years. So many things come rushing to mind. There were the neighborhood gatherings at the church, the school, and the homes; picnics beside the Little White River, the Red Cross barn dances during World War I, and just visiting around.

In times of sickness or trouble, because of the lack of telephones, good roads, and quick transportation, we were dependent on one another for help which was always freely given. When babies were born this was especially true. Neighborhood women helped until the doctor came and sometimes took complete charge when he did not arrive in time, or could not be located. I myself, have special cause to remember and be thankful for this spirit of neighborliness.

During our 15 years' residence in Mellette County four children were born to me. My daughter Beth was born in June 1913, Russell in May 1916, Doris in October 1920, and Conrad in April 1922. Little Doris passed away in August 1921 and Beth in February 1922. They rest in the White River Cemetery.

In February 1927 we moved to Pierre expecting to return to the farm when our boys had finished high school. There my youngest son was born in October 1927 and there Art passed away in April 1935 after being injured in an accident on a building which he was helping to build.

I later had a job in the Capitol in the Highway Planning Survey until I retired in January 1953. Mrs. Viola Cummings, formerly of White River, was also employed in that office and we enjoyed a long close friendship. I still keep my voting residence in Pierre, but spend much time visiting my children who are widely scattered. My daughter Winifred lives in Pierre and is girls' counsellor at the Government Indian School there. Her husband, Wayne Echelberger, has a position with the State Highway Department. He is a former superintendent of school at Norris and other South Dakota towns. My sons Bud (R. G.) and Conrad reside in California. Bud is connected with forest industries and Conrad is an insurance salesman. Bud's wife is the former Gladys Parks, who taught school in the Norris vicinity before her marriage. Russell is at present at Edmonton, Canada, where he has a position with Pan American Oil and Gas Co. Robert, the youngest is assistant county engineer of Spokane County at Spokane, Washington.

I have 11 grandchildren and one great grandchild.

# The Utterback Story

By Mrs. Dave Estes

James E. Utterback came from Virginia at the age of 24 and arrived at Fort Robinson, in the northwest corner of Nebraska in 1876. He worked as a Government blacksmith for the army. From Fort Robinson he was transferred back to the Red Cloud Agency which was later called the Pine Ridge Agency.

He was then employed as a Government herdsman and had the responsibility of getting cattle delivered to the various Government Issue Stations, as they were needed, from the large trail herds that were brought up from the South.

In 1879 he married Zoe Larvie, daughter of a famous French voyageur and fur trader, Joe Larvie.

Mr. and Mrs. Utterback were at the Pine Ridge Agency during the Wounded Knee Massacre. Zoe helped care for the wounded. "Cornie," as the whites nicknamed him (or "Wagamu," meaning pumpkin seed, as the Indians called him), helped feed and shelter the unfortunate, injured Indians as they were brought in from the battlefield.

Zoe Utterback in later years told many stories of her experiences of that time. Mr. Utterback was at the Agency when this Wounded Knee scare occurred and

"Cornie" Utterback

Zoe, with three small children, were escorted to the Agency by soldiers. She hid her sewing machine and what valuables she had, in a deep dry well.

After the Massacre the wounded Indians were brought and housed in a church. Zoe worked many days with the other women who were caring for these injured and suffering people. This Massacre was in December of 1890.

Later, Mr. Utterback moved his family to land inherited by Zoe. This was southeast of the town of Belvidere on Big White River and he lived there until he passed away in 1939, at the age of 87 years.

Mrs. Utterback lived on the ranch until 1950 and then she passed on. Both are buried in the Belvidere Cemetery.

For a person of limited education, Zoe Larvie Utterback was a remarkable woman—a wonderful helpmate to her husband and a devoted Mother to her children. She was an excellent cook and some of her specialties were her light bread and biscuits.

She was the daughter of the French fur trader, Joe Larvie, and a Cheyenne Indian mother. Zoe told many interesting stories of her father's trapping experiences and she could remember him returning home with a large, double, wagon box full of fine furs. Joe Larvie put up the first log house in Hot Springs and it is still standing. Three of his daughters married prominent pioneer ranch men. Julia married Mike Dunn. Sarah married the famous "Buffalo King," Scotty Phillips. Zoe married the Government blacksmith, "Cornie" Utterback, who later became a prosperous Mellette County rancher.

Mr. and Mrs. Utterback raised four children. The last of the family living (May 1961) is Maude, Mrs. Steve Estes, who lives with her daughter in Chamberlain, South Dakota.

(Ben Larvie, a nephew of Mrs. Utterback, and who was our neighbor for many years, often told me that the name of Larvie had once been spelled in the French fashion, Larribee. This had been changed to the easier pronounced form of Larvie, later on. W. R.)

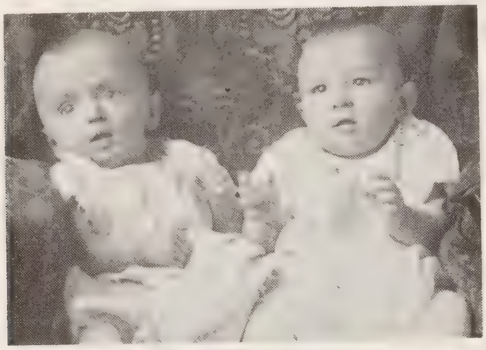
Zoe Utterback

# Valburg Pictures

Lutheran Church at White River.
Built in 1926.

Bill and Helen Valburg, first wedding in Lutheran Church in White River, Dec. 5, 1926. Married by Rev. Belno Lange.

# Valburg Pictures - Continued



**First twins baptized in Lutheran church, April 1, 1928: William Jay and Darlene Valburg.**

**Children of Mr. and Mrs. Bill Valburg, now of Murdo, S. D.; Billy, Darlene and Dale.**

# Stories of Leo and Katherine Vander May

**By Mrs. Leo Vander May**

Leo Vander May was born in Zandvoort, Netherlands, on October 1, 1882. Zandvoort is a summer resort town on the north sea coast.

He was the oldest of a family of eight children. His mother died when he was ten years old. The grandparents, uncles and aunts took the children and cared for them after their mother died. Leo's Uncle John took him. He ran a dray business so Leo learned to drive horses and also took care of some of his uncle's business at an early age. He did not get to go back to school after he was ten years old.

At the age of 20, or in 1902, he was drafted into the Netherlands Army. He was in the Cavalry. He served for the first year as a private at a salary of $1.00 for five days. Then he was a corporal for one year at a salary of two dollars for five days.

After his discharge from the Army he worked in Antwerp, Belgium, until April 1907. Then he and his boy friend, Will Termes, came to the U. S. A. on the ship New Amsterdam. They landed at New York harbor and came by train from there to Armour, S. D. There Leo worked on the farm for Emil Schrank.

In 1909 he moved to his homestead with a team and wagon. It was near Wasta in Meade County, S. D. After proving up on the homestead he moved back near Ethan, S. D. There he worked as a hired man on a farm near Ethan and later rented a farm near Plankinton, South Dakota.

He was married to Katherine Crampton in June 1917. They moved to Washabaugh County to a farm about 30 miles south of Kadoka. In 1919 we moved back to my mother's farm near Ethan after my father died.

Our oldest child, Irene, was born near Ethan; Harry and Loyd were born near Mitchell and Francis was born after we had again moved back to Washabaugh County.

The year after we moved back out west our house burned down. Our good neighbors took us in and all of them helped us build a new house. We will never forget their kindness.

We got along some way when drouth and grasshoppers were so bad. Many people moved away then. Then came better years, the children graduated from high school. Irene began teaching school and the boys started farming for themselves. They are all married now and we have 19 wonderful grandchildren.

* * *

I, Katherine Crampton Vander May, was born on my folks' homestead near Ethan, S. D., December 2, 1889.

I went to a country school nearby with over 40 other pupils, including all eight grades and only one teacher.

In the winter the heating system was an old heating stove and the only water the children had to drink was from the snow melted on that stove.

There was no boughten playground equipment of any kind, but believe me, we had as much fun playing games as they do now with all their playground equipment. We played such games as Store, Blind Man's Bluff, Duck on the Rock, London Bridge, Fruit Basket Upset, and Drop the Handkerchief. When the snow was on the ground we played Fox and Geese, and that was a lively game with about 40 playing. In cold weather we played inside the school house, games like New Orleans, Marching to old Quebec and Show.

I graduated from the eighth grade and began teaching school when I was 16. Most teachers, those days, taught on third, second or first grade certificates. Most certificates were obtained by taking an examination. Few of the teachers, at that time, ever went to college or even high school. Married women hardly ever taught school and few men taught. Teachers were mostly young women.

I began teaching on a third grade certificate and later taught for several years on a first grade. I went to Dakota Wesleyan for several six-weeks terms during the summer.

I taught for 11 years in all, so many of the old timers in Davison County either went to school with me or went to school to me. I taught for six years at the Roosevelt School in Tobin Township. The second teacher that I went to school to, Martin Grady, died in Mitchell just this last summer and many of them died long ago.

Many of my schoolmates are gone too. But I remember many happy days I spent with my schoolmates and also with the children that I taught and worked with for eleven busy, happy years.

# In Memory of Rev. H. C. Van Valkenburgh

IN MEMORY OF
REV. HUGH C. VAN VALKENBURGH
Born
July 14, 1875, at Chargrin Falls, Ohio
Died
March 19, 1954, at Arlington, Nebr.

(Rev. Van, as he was called by the Mellette County homesteaders, was himself a homesteader. He homesteaded southwest of White River on SW 9 41-29. He officiated at many homestead weddings and funerals. He held services in many homestead shacks, school houses or wherever the homesteaders called him. He was the first minister of the Happy Hollow Church, the first country church for Whites built in Mellette County. He also served at Wood, White River, Cottonwood and other community centers. The following letter, which was sent to me for use in my book, gives a brief glimpse of the fine man and minister he was. I had the privilege of hearing him preach when I was a little girl and I know that no book about Mellette County homesteaders would be complete without a word from Rev. Van Valkenburgh. I thank the owners for loaning this letter to us for this purpose. W. R.)

* * *

December 20, 1952

Mr. and Mrs. B. Nollsch
Dear folks:

We have been trying to remember all of our dear friends of past days and do count you as amongst the dearest. I remember your fine co-operation in the Happy Hollow Church as superintendent of the Sunday School, your wife as organist and both of you for any other work there was to do in the church. You were among the many choice ones of the little group there, so I do not wonder at your success and happiness throughout the years. All the folks in Mellette County were always very kind and generous with us.

Did I tell you that I had the privilege of burying Charlie Kerlin last spring? He had been ill a long time. Mary, Doris and Dick were present. I married Mary to a Sholtz at Linwood about ten years ago and they have four children, I believe. Also laid away Clark Gallagher in Lincoln about a year ago. That leaves only Naomi, who with her daughter and husband, live in Toledo, Ohio. Buried Mrs. G. and Tom also. I was asked to come to Wood for the services for Fred Kirch last May but was just getting over a heart attack. It was the largest funeral ever held in the county they said. But enough of this, at such a time as this, but only those who fathom the meaning of sorrow can know the real meaning of joy, hope and faith.

Well, I am trying not to rust out; I am quite busy with my Justice of the Peace duties. Was elected for my fourth two-year term in November by a vote of 571, out of a possible vote of 596 in the two parties. Have about ten cases a month, most of them for traffic offenses. Also have collected about $3,000.00 in delinquent accounts the past year. So for one of seventy seven, I am quite active, don't you think? Also take some part in the church where I was pastor for ten and a half years. Mary teaches a large Bible class; she also plans the programs for the Ladies Circle. My son-in-law is deacon, my daughter is deaconess and she is chairman of a division of the Ladies Circle, so we all keep more or less busy. I also am Chaplain of the Masonic Lodge, having held the job for twenty years. Guess that is all they think an ex-preacher is good for. Well, they need praying for, as do all of us, constantly. But that isn't all the old man does, I attend the meeting of the Arlington Community Club twice a month and serve on committees, as well as eating a big dinner cooked by the ladies of our church.

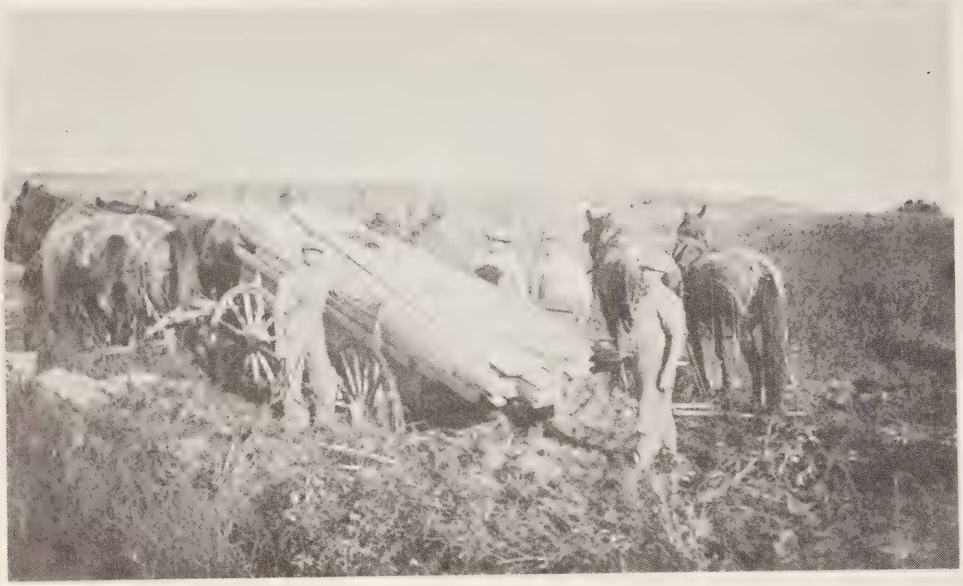
Attended the Congregational Church at Rapid City one Sunday and I wonder how it is doing. It takes a good bit of real religion as well as wealth and social standing to make a good church, don't you think? Some have plenty of wealth and lack devotion and consecration, which are sadly lacking in many churches today. However, not just talking and singing about religion makes one religious.

Well, this is not much of a letter, but is sent with love and best wishes for all of our very dear friends of forty years ago. Hope you can come to see us some day; also that you escape the recent big snow and forty mile wind that punished us recently. We were tied up here for three days.

Sincerely yours,
(Signed) Rev. and Mrs. Van and Louise

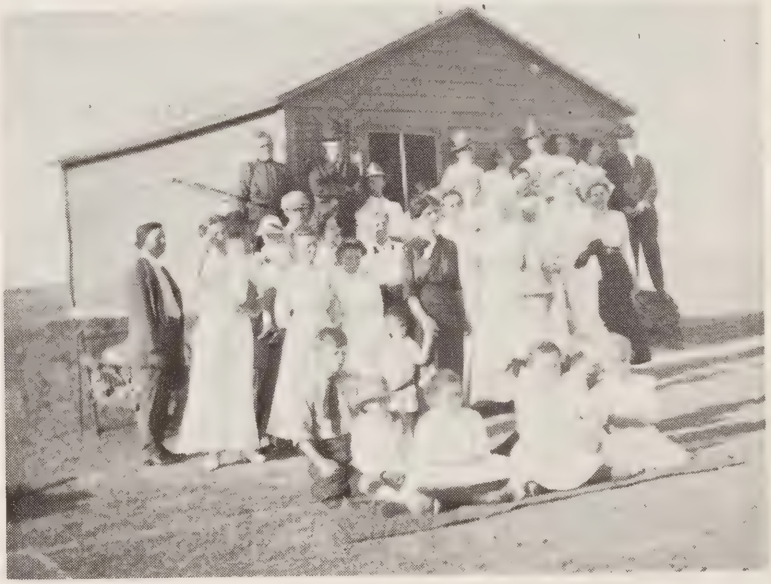
* * *

(Mrs. Mary Van Valkenburgh, widow of the late Rev. Van Valkenburgh, passed away February 11, 1962, after a long illness. Mellette County friends will remember her and join me in sympathy for her family. W. R.)



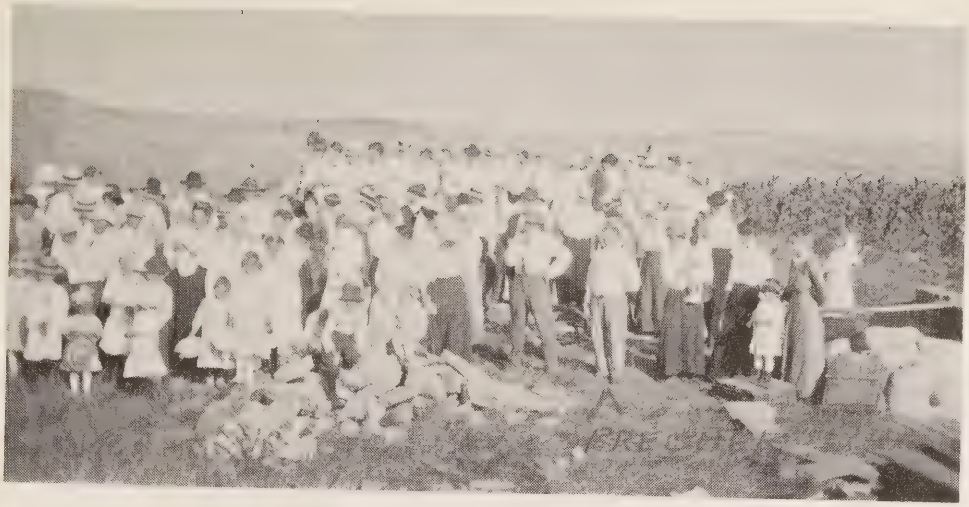
Hauling lumber for Happy Hollow Church from Valentine, Nebr. Lige Graham stuck in mud. Bis Nollsch helping, also Jim Mitchell and Pete Petersen.

# "A Picture Story of The Happy Hollow Church"

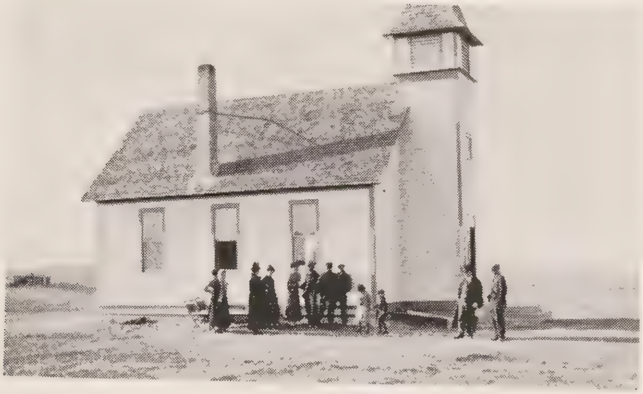


First Happy Hollow Sunday School held at Mrs. Grooms.

Bis Nollsch, Jim Mitchell, Lige Graham and Pete Petersen hauling lumber for Happy Hollow church from Valentine, Nebr.

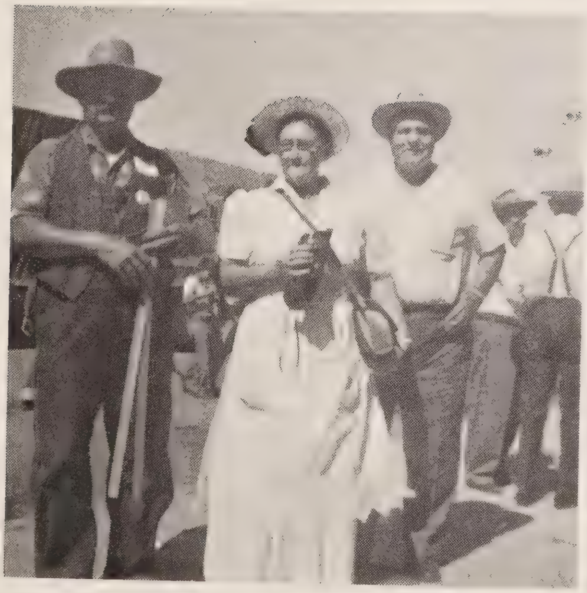


July 14, 1915. Laying cornerstone for Happy Hollow Church. First church built for Whites in Mellette County.

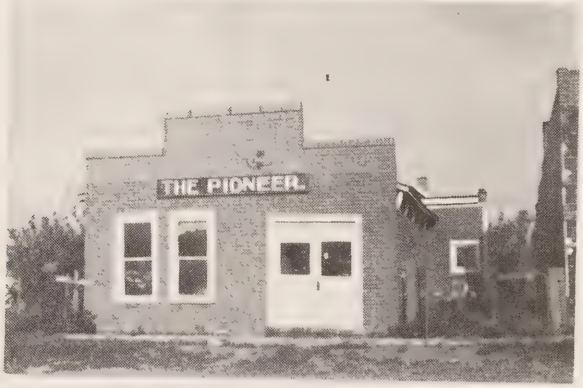


Happy Hollow Church, dedicated August 18, 1916. Moved into Wood in July 1929, still in use there.

# Wood Pioneers



Paul Reutter with Mr. and Mrs. Jim Peacock, at the 50th anniversary celebration of Tripp County in Winner, 1959. Peacocks were killed in a car accident later.



The Pioneer Office at Wood, S. D.—a well-known landmark, where F. C. Kirch printed the Mellette County Pioneer for so many years and Mrs. Ida Kirch has carried on since.

# The Wesley Walden Story

**By Mrs. Charles Pigg**

Mrs. Pearl Walden's father, Richard Presslor, homesteaded just north of E. L. Pigg's place in 1912. Later, he returned to his former home at Judson, Ind. The Wesley Waldens, just married, were thrilled with the opportunity of coming to South Dakota to homestead in 1915. She came by passenger train and he came on the freight car with their possessions.

They freighted their things down from Murdo, S. D., and had to ford the Little White River. The team pulled the tongue out of the wagon there, so Ernie and Hank Zickrick helped them get across.

At first they lived in the Boblett place until they moved Mr. Presslor's shack north to their homestead.

Frank Buck and family lived just east of Ed Piggs and southeast of Waldens. He was a barber and spent much of his time in Murdo.

Walden spent many evenings at the E. L. Piggs home listening to the radio and to Charles playing his violin.

They had four children, Thelma, Floyd, Marion and Naomi.

Mr. Walden passed away in August 1959 and Mrs. Pearl Walden lives at Marshall, Ind.

MELLETTE Co HOMESTEADERS ASSN PICNIC

Old Settlers Picnic, 1913

# The A. V. Watson Story

**By Mrs. George Tate**

A. V. Watson was born at Emerson, Iowa, September 16, 1875. His parents were Constantine Smith Watson and Margaret McGee Watson. He was an industrious little boy. He snared gophers, earning enough gopher bounty to buy a calf. The calf grew, was sold and two more calves purchased. This continued until he had ten calves which he sold for two hundred dollars which seemed like a fortune for a young boy.

A. V. Watson came to Mellette County to homestead in 1912.

On May 10, 1910, Albert Vincent Watson, better known as "A. V.," applied at the Chamberlain land office for a quarter of land.

In 1912 at the age of 37, he sold his farm in Iowa, loaded his personal belongings into an auto and shipped two carloads of cattle to Murdo McKenzie.

He had drawn for a number for a homestead in 1911 and in 1912 he filed claim on the SE 22 43-30. The appraised price was three dollars per acre.

Neighbors were few and far between and there were no roads as we know them today. As time went on A. V. purchased some surrounding land until he owned seven quarters of land. The quarter of land where he built his new home in 1921 boasted three running springs. I can still remember the taste of the clear cold water. During the drouth years, neighbors, whose water supplies had dwindled, came from miles around to get water from A. V. who generously, shared his abundant water supply.

In October 1922 he was married to Mrs. Emma Strong, a pretty young widow with two fine children, Fern and Harold. They met in White River when Mrs. Strong was deputy county treasurer of Mellette county.

A. V. had been living in a typical homesteader's one-room house but before he was married he built a large six-room house for them. It had a full basement, furnace and running water. It was situated on a gentle slope surrounded by rolling grassland hills. These hills were dotted with Hereford cattle. My mother still often says that was one of the prettiest sights that she has ever seen was the little Hereford calves on the grassy hillsides.

I arrived on the scene August 16, 1925. As soon as I was old enough to get around on my own power, I almost followed Daddy as close as his shadow.

He was an early riser, during spring and summer months; 4:30 A. M. found Daddy up and doing chores. After an early breakfast, he would saddle my horse and away we would go. My saddle horse was one that Daddy had ridden for years and had trained it to be a very good cow pony. Age had slowed it down so it was a safe mount for me. Daddy always had a herd of 15 to 30 horses. He gave me a sorrel colt one spring. And each following spring, when we went out to view the cattle and horse herds, I would trade him my "old" colt for a "brand new one."

He had a very complete blacksmith shop on his ranch and neighbors often came to have him fix things or to use his forge or other equipment.

Branding and dehorning time was an important occasion on the ranch. The big round-up was exciting in itself. When the calves were corraled things really got noisy, with the yells of the cowboys and the bawling of the cows and calves. I always felt sorry for the calves when they were roped and thrown to the ground, then the red hot branding irons were used. The acrid smell of burned hide and the bawling of the frightened calf was instantaneous.

Mother said she usually must have cooked a quarter of beef to feed the crew of ranchers and cowboys who came to assist with the branding job. My brother, Harold, had the important job of tallying the number of calves branded.

Then the terrible dry years came. During the early days of the drouth, Dad rented hayland several miles from home. My brother Harold and Bob Kriege batched in a tent and cut the sparse crop of hay to be hauled home. One time a pack of hounds got into their tent and ate all of their available food supplies. The boys had no transportation until Dad would come in the car so they lived on pancakes every meal for three days.

My mother moved to White River to send Fern and Harold to high school and there she started a ladies dress shop. I attended school in White River and spent my summers on the ranch where Fern took care of me and cooked for Dad and his hired help.

The grasshoppers descended upon the farms next. Eventually Dad was forced to follow the path many of his friends had taken and sold the last of his cattle to the Government. He moved to White River, and at the age of 59 he purchased a Ford truck from the Chris Anders Garage in White River and began a new life as a trucker. He took an active part in trucking until he was 75 years old, then he began hiring drivers, and at the age of 77 he sold his semi-trailer truck.

**A. V. Watson and granddaughters on his 75th birthday.**

Daddy spent the balance of his life in White River. He enjoyed visiting with his old time friends, especially Louie King, his long time hunting and fishing companion, also with Paul Monroe and Harry Daniels at the cream station. Watsons had purchased the Mullen building that is north of C. E. Kell's law office and it was easy for him to visit his friends from there. He passed away June 24, 1954.

I'll always remember the patience he had with a little girl's attempt at fishing and I remember riding my pony—following him throughout many days.

He left his wife Emma, who lives at Arlington, S. D.; his stepson, Harold Strong, Lake Preston, S. D.; a stepdaughter, Fern Iwan, White River, S. D.; and lastly, me, Elaine Watson Tate, his only child. I live on a farm near Sinai, S. D., with my husband George and our three children, Rita, Susan and Paul.

A. V. Watson was also a member of the Frontier Days Association that planned and put on the old White River Frontier Days, that wonderful three to five-day celebration that was held every year for so many years.

# The Weiss Story

**By Blanche Kaufman**

The Weiss family came to Aberdeen, S. D., from Canada in 1902. They moved to Akaska, S. D., in 1906, about the time the railroad went through there. They farmed at both places.

They were a musical family. The son, Ernest, and his sister teamed up with another young German boy from Strasburg, N. D., to furnish music for local dances. Ernest stayed with the farming but the other young man stayed with music and went on to become "Mr. Music Maker," Lawrence Welk—each highly successful in his own field.

After Ernest served in World War I, he was married and they lived on a farm about two miles from the Missouri River. They raised sheep and cattle, which they watered at the river. They also had a large investment in big tractors and machinery.

During the drouth years feed and water became scarce. Following several crop failures, Ernest and his wife decided to move. Since almost everyone else was in the same condition it was almost impossible to sell out, so they abandoned the machinery. Taking an old Model T truck, also a car and 500 head of sheep, they and their five children started out for Parmelee, S. D., where Mrs. Weiss had relatives living. They loaded the truck with a water tank and some barrels, flour, bedding and other necessities. They tied the car behind the truck with ten year old Harold to guide it, and with Mrs. Weiss driving the sheep on foot, they started out.

Where the country was fairly level they pulled the car behind the truck but where it was hilly, they had to leave one vehicle, take the other one on a few miles then leave it and Ernest would walk back to get the other one. In the meantime, Mrs. Weiss walked and walked. Eventually, she drove the sheep all the way from Akaska to Parmelee, S. D. When night came, she would bed the sheep down and wait for the others to catch up with her. Once the truck broke down and Ernest hitch-hiked to Vivian, S. D., for repairs. He worked all night repairing the truck while Mrs. Weiss waited, some 15 miles farther on for him to come.

The biggest problem was water for the sheep. When they could get it, they filled the water tank and the barrels on the truck to be used in an emergency. At one place they pulled water with a rope and bucket from a shallow well for all the sheep. At some places the people were very helpful and shared their water with them. At other places they were driven away. Once on the trip they passed a good dam but the owner came out and forbid them to water there. One night, some farmers who had seen them driving sheep all afternoon brought a bucket of milk and some food to the camp for the children.

It took a long time to get the sheep across the bridge at Pierre, S. D. The patrolman and any other help that was available was used to hurry them up because traffic was held up all the time. The sheep were watered good at Pierre and that was the last water they found until they reached the Big White River about three days later.

Eight miles west of the town of White River they stopped at a farm. These people had a small house standing vacant which they offered for the night. This was the first time, Weiss' had been in a house since leaving Akaska. They never knew the name of the people that lived there but have never forgotten their kindness. That was the last place they watered until they reached Parmelee. The sheep had been short of feed and water before they started out on the drive and were quite thin. Although water was short, feed was pretty good along the way so they were in good shape when they reached their destination. They had been on the road almost three weeks, averaging about 15 miles a day and the last day they made 20 miles.

Ernest Weiss had rented some land but the only shelter there was a sort of a dugout in the hillside with a small log building on the front. It snowed the day they arrived and they didn't even have a stove with them as the tank and barrels took up all the room in the truck. They brought some flour with them on the trip but it rained when they were near Pierre and spoiled some of that. Mrs. Philip Kaiser baked some bread for them. This was in September 1934.

**Ernest Weiss home in Todd County**

Mrs. Weiss and the children took care of the sheep while Ernest went back for some of the things. They lived at this place until 1938 when they moved about eight miles northwest of Parmelee into a tiny little house where they lived for two years. After that, they moved into Mellette County when they bought the place where Harold Weiss now lives. They remodeled the house, built some sheds and granaries, and planted a nice grove of trees.

During this time they had been building up a herd of Hereford cattle and in 1946 they sold the sheep. They moved to their present location in Todd County in 1948. They built a house over the basement there, built granaries and sheds, planted a lot of trees, changed to Black Angus cattle in 1955 and over the years have built up a large farming operation.

Two children were added to the family after coming here; both of these children are now attending concordia College. Four of the older children are married and living nearby. There are six grandchildren.

# Life Story of Mr. and Mrs. Sam White Horse

**By Bess Adrian**

Mrs. White Horse was born Nancy Thin Elk. She was born in an Indian village along the Little White River, about six miles northeast of the present town of White River. This was near the old road between White River and Murdo. She had three brothers and two sisters. Her grandmother was Mrs. Alex Bordeaux. They had a large ranch and Alex Bordeaux employed many Indians. Nancy's father worked for him too.

She was baptized by Father Florentine Digman, S. H., of the St. Francis Mission. He used to visit the camp and the Indians called him, "Putin Sapa," which meant black beard. He worked with the Indians many years until his beard and hair were both snowy white. She also knew Father Henry and Father Buechal, S. J., very well.

Nancy was sent to the Hare Boarding School for a while until the Government boarding school was built. At that time they took the Indian children to the school in September and kept them until June without any vacations. When they completed the sixth grade they received a certificate of graduation. Her great grandmother made her a beautiful beaded Indian costume, complete with moccasins for her graduation. Her great grandfather's name in Indian was "Epa Yan Ka." It meant "Sitting on the Hill." His allotment name was Black Rabbit. They also lived in Mellette County.

Later, Nancy went to school at Haskill Institute at Lawrence for three years. It was while she was there that the terrible influenza epidemic struck Mellette County in 1917-1918. It killed many families of Indians. She remembers getting letters from home in which they gave the names of the people who had died from the dreadful disease. Her younger sister was one of the victims. She studied home economics and sewing and has always been very thankful of it. Part of the time, in later years, she has worked as a seamstress at the Mission Boarding School.

Nancy Thin Elk married Sam White Horse in 1921. They have had nine children; five are still living.

The oldest daughter, Mrs. Bertha Shaw, lives at Mission. Shaws work at the Boarding school and they have six children.

Samuel J. White Horse lives at Spearfish, his wife is going to the B. H. T. College there. They have three children.

White Horse's third child is a daughter, Irmalee Yellow Eagle. Her father-in-law is the oldest resident near Westover. Irmalee and her family live in California and they have six children.

Albert White Horse has three children. He lives with his folks at Mission.

Theresa Guerue and her family live at He Dog. Her husband drives the school bus and they have five children.

Their daughter Lydia was married to Raymond Charging Elk. He was killed in World War II, three months before his son Edward Darris was born. When the baby was eight months old Lydia also died. Sam and Nancy raised the boy and he is now 17 years old, a junior at Mission High, and a top basketball player.

White Horse's allotment land is one-half mile south of the Mellette County line. They have lived there most of the time but her folks still live in Mellette County. During the winter they move into Mission so the children can go to school. Nancy always takes an active part in church affairs and is a member of the Altar Society and the Catholic Daughters Court—Our Lady of the Sioux, Number 1767 of Mission.

Sam White Horse was born in Mellette County on St. Patrick's Day, March 17, 1897. His father was Fred White Horse. There were six children in their family, one girl and five boys. He was sent to school in 1910 at Rapid City and also went to school at Pierre.

He remembers seeing Haley's comet in 1910. They had noticed the star with a bright tail on it until one night it traveled east real fast. There had been many tales told about it—such as that it would burn up the world, but it actually only burned up itself.

About 1912, he left the school at Rapid City. It was quite late in the spring so instead of sending him back to school, they put him to work in the "Spring Round-up."

Mellette County had open range at that time. The Indians owned a lot of cattle and horses that were allowed to graze on the Rosebud Reservation. The county was divided into six areas or districts. White men could lease these districts or buy grazing privileges. Cattle were supposed to pasture in their own area.

Each spring they had a six wagon round-up. Each round-up wagon was numbered. No. one was Rosebud; No. two, Parmelee; No. three, Norris, No. four, White Thunder or Wood; No. five, Butte Creek; No. six, White River.

The Indians' cattle were branded on the shoulder with I D or T I D for Trust Indian Department. The owner's personal brand was generally put on the side and the number of the area it belonged in was on the hip. Throughout the year the riders had to check on these brands and keep driving cattle back so that they wouldn't wander off of their proper range. Severe storms would sometimes drive the cattle many miles away.

One of the worst winters that Sam remembers was in the spring of 1914. It was quite late in the spring and the cattle were shedding their hair when there was a snow storm with a tremendous amout of snow. You couldn't see any ravines or valleys, the country all looked level. Hundreds of cattle died in this storm. That was the time that a whole herd of big steers over near Vetal killed themselves. They drifted with the storm into a big lake bed, then trampled one another to death.

# The Maude White Shield Story

**By Bess Adrian**

Maude White Shield was born in the Ring Thunder Indian Camp—what is now Louie Krogman's pasture—on December 28, 1890 (the day before the Battle at Wounded Knee). Her father was Giles White Shield and her mother's name was Alvena. At the age of five her folks sent her to the St. Francis Mission to attend school. She went there for 11 years except for the summer vacations. Her parents moved to her father's allotment, a short distance west of Louie Krogman's present home, and she always spent her vacations there at White Shields.

In school they studied their lessons half of the day and spent the rest of the time learning to cook, sew and do house work. At recess they learned to crochet, also they beaded belts, hatbands and bridles.

In 1907, she married Jesse Jack. They lived with her mother until she passed away in 1928. By that time, Maude's sister had died and willed Maude some land at the top of the Little White River hill on the Ring Thunder road. They moved to that place in 1928 and have lived there since. Maude and Jesse Jack had nine children, five are still living in 1961. They are: Francis, living nearby; Eugene, at Potato Creek; Leonard at Pine Ridge; Beulah High Bull, also at Pine Ridge; Rosa Kills Plenty lives at Soldier Creek near Mission, South Dakota.

In 1931, Maude married Moses Good Voice. They had three children, only one of whom survived, Viola Provincial of Mission, S. D.

In 1938, Maude was married to Charlie Horn Chips. He was a medicine man; he also made tomahawks and sold them. He passed away a few years later and Maude married Emmett Eagle Bear, a brother of Ed Eagle Bear. He was a good carpenter but was unable to do much of it as his health was poor. He passed away in December of 1959.

Maude has always been thankful for the training she had in school. It enabled her to sew for her family. She used to tan a great many hides and had two of the bone scrapers that the Indians used in taking the hair off of the hides.

Maude's three oldest children went to the Pine Creek Day School when Frank Perry's father was the teacher. Her daughter Viola went to the St. Francis Mission until she married Brian Provincial, who lived close to them at the top of the river hill. They have a little daughter, Sherlinda, who is Maude's pride and joy. Shortly after Sherlinda was born, Viola lost her eyesight. She has studied Braille and is able to read books and also do her housework.

Maude's eyes have cataracts; the doctor has promised to operate on them. Except for her poor eyesight, Maude is very active and loves to visit with friends.

# Remembering White River

**By Laura Eveleth Wildberger**

I came to White River as a small girl in 1913. I stayed with my sister Edith, Mrs. Charles Hight. I started my first term of school in White River and Miss Coyle (who later married James Wilder) was my teacher.

I can remember that was the year my sister's first child was born and he passed away soon after birth.

Among my school day memories, I remember Vera Cummings was my best pal; she was a very sweet girl. Her parents were Mr. and Mrs. F. J. Cummings; he was County Auditor of Mellette County before moving to Kadoka. After all those years we met again just a few days before Vera's death.

I remember that Cummings had a folding bed. When it was folded up it looked like a beautiful piece of furniture. But Vera and I also used it as a game. We would try to see who could stay in the bed the longest, when it was folded up. Weren't we silly kids?

Mrs. J. A. Brown was Vera's grandmother and I remember how she loved us both, as grandmas do. I appreciated this as my parents and grandparents lived at Raven, Nebr., at that time, which was a long ways away.

I returned to White River for a visit and went to a picnic of the Epworth League of the Methodist church, the night Vera Cummings was killed.

I worked for J. M. Sturdevant one summer and in 1924 started working for T. B. Holland and Company. I boarded and roomed in their home for a while and later with Grandma Brown.

Mr. and Mrs. Wildberger and children, Valda, Twylia, Dorothea and Mertie.

Those working at Hollands store at the same time I did were Ida Spears Ryan, Frank Perry, Victory Tomsik, Gerald Harrison, Joe Hrachovec, and Mr. and Mrs. Holland.

I was married in 1927 to Henry Wildberger and moved to Clough, S. D. We had five children, one son and four daughters. Our son Thomas was called to Heaven when eighteen months old.

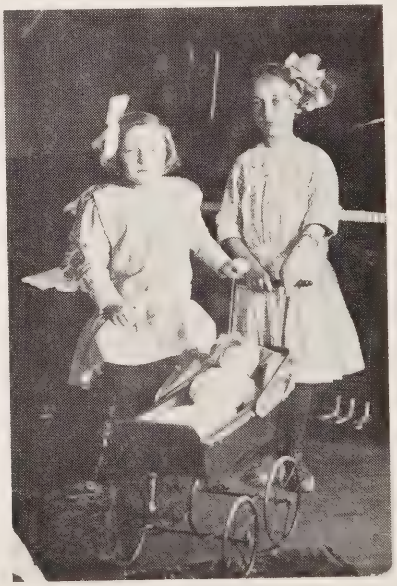
Our girls are all married. Dorothea is Mrs. David Brown. Her husband is manager of the Tri-State Mill at Oelrichs, South Dakota.

Mertie is Mrs. Eugene Bowen. He, with his father and brother, have the Bowen Trucking of Sturgis, S. D.

Twylia is Mrs. Fred Huffman and he is a truck driver for L. A. K. ranch at Newcastle, Wyo.

Valda is Mrs. Robert Yamada, Seattle, Wash. She and Bob both work at Boeing Aircraft.

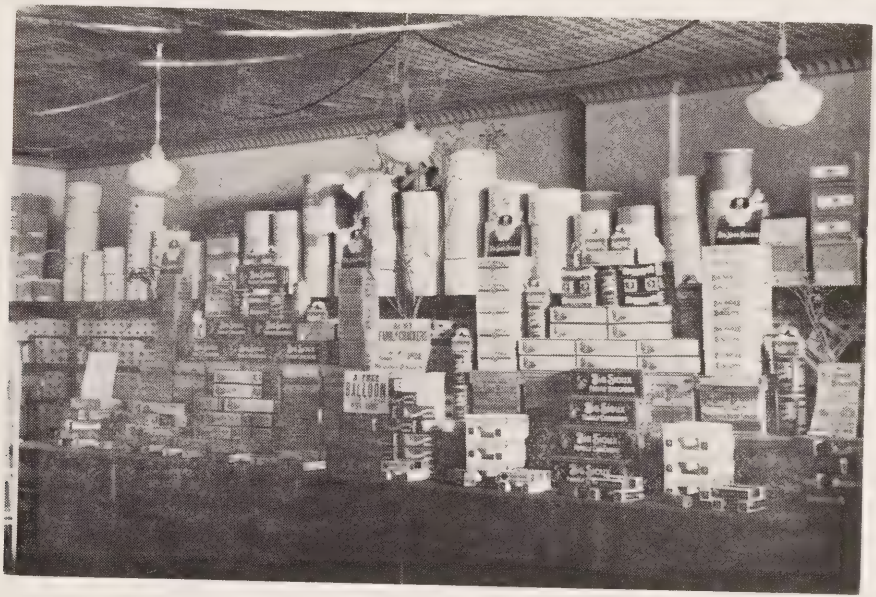
We are grandparents to nine of the peppiest grandkids in the Dakota territory.



Laura (Eveleth) Wildberger and Vera Cummings, 48 years ago.

Harlan Hight, Bob Johnson, Florence Eveleth, Don and Irene Hight, Wilma Eveleth, and Maurine Hight.

Grandma Brown. Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Brown and son ran first store and P. O. in White River, 1911.



In Hollands Store, 1924, when Laura was clerk.

Mrs. T. B. Holland with Elaine and Nella

Hrachovecs and Father Walsh

# I Remember Dakota

**By Estelle Wise, D. C.**

My sister Fannie and I became interested in the Government land opening through friends whose Bonesteel relatives had urged them to come and register. Sister had just sold her neighborhood grocery store and was eager to go; a heavy bookkeeping position was impairing my eyesight. Besides, we lived in a Chicago suburb, and the idea of getting away from jogging along in streetcars morning and evening was a big temptation.

So, in the fall of 1911 we registered in Gregory. We both drew numbers but Sister didn't file. I homesteaded on SE 13 41-30, six and one-half miles southwest of White River, adjoining the quarter that has the "Twin Buttes" on it.

In April 1912 we went to Valentine, Nebr., as we had seen ads, that there would be taxis to take us from there to White River. Because of recent rains most of the car owners wouldn't make the trip. But a Mr. Brown finally agreed to take us and two men who had been waiting and were impatient to leave. Most of the 56 miles we rode through a heavy rain storm, and it was so dark we couldn't see out of the car windows. The car roof leaked in spots but the young man kept us entertained with his nonsense, and we had a good driver, so everybody remained in good humor. Later we learned many passengers had to push cars through the mud, and we didn't.

Mr. Brown said one hotel was filled but he was sure he could find rooms for us. At the Tomsik hotel there was a room for my sister and me; the men would have to sleep in the attic—reached by a step ladder from the second floor. We stayed, the men looked further.

The small lobby was packed; we could scarcely squeeze in with our suitcases. While we were standing, waiting, those standing near us would ask, what seemed to be the routine questions: "Are you a homesteader?" "Have you filed?" "Who is your locator?" "Where do you expect to locate?" "Where are you from?" "Your name?" All seemed friendly and interested. Then Mrs. Tomsik called to us to follow her upstairs. The building was as yet unfinished inside. Our tiny bedroom had building paper tacked to the studdings for partitions. However, the room was clean and we were thankful to be indoors.

A schoolbell announced supper. It was a plentiful meal served family style. They had well water which was brackish—even coffee or tea didn't hide the taste. Discussions about the advantages and disadvantages of different parts of the county gave us greenhorns considerable information, at least what to look for.

The next day, Sunday, it rained all day and we all sat as near the stove as we could get and visited.

Monday was bright and clear and we "looked the town over." I got part-time work with a locator which would pay my locating fee. He said he would select a good piece of land for me, so I filed "sight unseen." It happened that an error had been made in the Government map, the "Twin Buttes" that were marked on my quarter were really on the quarter north of me. During a lull in the filing the locator had a man drive us out to see our claims. The young man in front got out first and Miss R. moved to his place. We reached the buttes, the driver was puzzled, was sure he'd made a mistake. He drove off the road to a stake and up from that onto a steep hill. With just the slightest quiver for a warning the rear seat and I flew off into space and without rolling, landed at the bottom of the ravine, the buggy seat on top of me. I managed a little squeak so they heard me. He drove back to the buttes and saw they were on Miss R.'s land. She was angry and didn't stay.

I hired a young carpenter, a well digger and a plowman the first week. The carpenter boasted that his shacks didn't blow away as he'd seen many do, that he bolted his to six-foot posts driven into the ground. It got a good try-out one summer evening. A terrific wind shook it for about two hours. It stayed on its posts but the posts from then on leaned toward the east and the house was creaky. We heard later that the lumber of the lumber yard was blown all over town.

We had to stay in town a month waiting for our house to be built. We made friends; did a lot of walking; went to two or three dances. The floor would become so sandy we couldn't hear the music so couples would dance to their own singing. That was fun at first but the novelty wore off. One morning we visited the Indian Day School and found it very interesting. To get to it we had to cross on a swinging bridge that had an uneven floor from constant repairing. Except for the Indians who were used to it, it was quite a stunt to walk on it. We attended the first public meeting of the new library organization; heard some good "pep" talks there.

May 21, 1912, we had our belongings hauled to the homestead in a wagon, Sister in the front seat. Miss Schives and Miss Tenney and I sat on boxes in the back. When we got there we served a light lunch, using tinware, and a trunk for a table. The dishes and other household supplies Mother had sent did not arrive for several days.

While we had that sort of equipment a neighbor came the next day to ask if we'd serve him an occasional meal until his wife came, for which he'd do various chores for us—bring supplies, build a table, put up shelves. Fanny was a good cook and in a few days we had three boarders. We had a three burner stove with a one burner oven. Sometimes we were

**A hay barn. Miss Wise and Mrs. Byrne, Proctor and Mason Richards and Gordon Fulton.**

at our wits' end trying to serve decent meals. The men seemed satisfied and their wives later became close friends of ours.

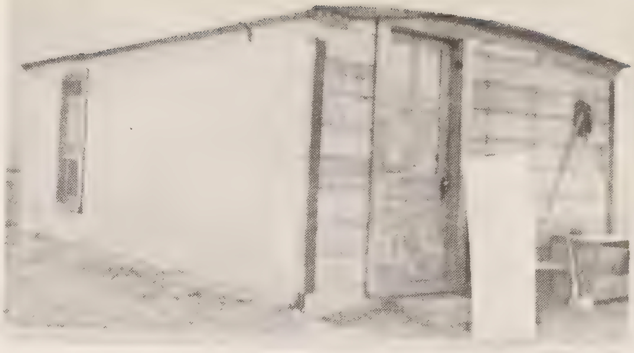
We had a 17 foot well with six foot of water that was much better than the water at the hotel. We had three acres plowed (as required), and planted it to vegetables and melons. Grasshoppers took everything but corn and beans. We had loads of beans. A second planting was coming up in September when a hard freeze settled the garden for that year. After that we had mild weather until Christmas Day.

Sister was working in Murdo, and Mother was with me much of the summer. She left for home early in December. December 9, the clerk of the schools drove up, asked me to go to what later became the Cody district school, with him. One family was driving him wild because they had no school. He knew I was no teacher, but he was desperate.

A Mrs. Clara Byrne had offered the use of one-half of her house for a school provided they would hire a woman teacher who would live with her. She lived on SE 31 42-27. The house was 16 x 24 feet, built on top of a hill so she could see the country around her. The school had white wood desks and it was a bright, cheerful room. We had brought cartons of text books and supplies and school started the next day (December 10, 1912) with eight pupils in seven grades. Later an 18 year old boy, John Beck, came to learn the language. He had a good German education. At his request he started with the first reader, and went through all the text books in the six months term. Other pupils were Proctor and Mason Richards, Gordon Fulton, Sophia Smith, Anton and Barbara Greenwalt and another child whose name I have forgotten.

Here, too, were wonderful neighbors. Some of them were Mrs. Swazee and Mrs. Bunker, whose homestead shacks were about six feet apart; Mr. and Mrs. Atwood, Mr. and Mrs. Maxwell and Mrs. McCoy. We had good times and get-togethers. In good weather there was Sunday School from 2:00 o'clock until about 3:30, which brought homesteaders from quite a distance. I don't remember what building that was in—not at the school. Often the meeting was followed by dinner at the Richards home nearby. (Richards' shack is shown at beginning of story, Abandoned Shack.) There were always platters piled high with deep brown, fried jack rabbits and cottontails furnished by the men. I presume the women contributed something, but the large platters of rabbit (which I'd never liked before) are all I remember. Mrs. Byrne was afraid to ride in a car in that hilly country, so someone with a buggy would take her.

Of course I had to get to the claim at least every three or four weeks and that gave me a few interesting times. Once the team of a livery man in White River became frightened at a small washout in the road, balked, and backed into a deep pit on the other side. The man had to go back to White River for another buggy.



Mrs. Byrne's shack—the school room.

And there was the March 1913 blizzard. It had us sealed in at Mrs. Byrnes for two days. Snow was drifted to the top of our door. The third day two neighbors came to shovel us out. In the meantime I had stood on a chair and knocked the top of the drift off with a spade, making an opening big enough to crawl through—pulled myself up, through it, and slid down outside. Couldn't reach our coal but one of a pile of branches showed through the snow. It was quite large. With the aid of the spade I crawled up the drift, shoved the branch into the room and I got back in. The branch kept us warm that night.

The school year ended June 10, 1913 (this was a six month term). We had a large picnic. My sister and a friend were there and took me back to the homestead. A neighbor plowed and planted more acres on my place on shares that year.

In July I took a temporary position at the Rosebud Agency, getting back to the homestead as often as I could. I always brought Agency friends with me and our neighbors would drive over to see what they could do to make our stay pleasant. And they always brought home-cooked food. The Stoezels, the Hendricksens, the Hansons, the Lindbergs. All were marvelous neighbors and friends.

After I "Proved up" I didn't get back there very often.

(Dr. Wise is compiling a book about her homesteading days in Dakota. W. R.)

Picnic in Cody neighborhood, in Little Badlands east of White River, 1913.

# First Happy Hollow Homesteader

**By Al Wolford**

In 1911 the Chicago and North Western railroad advertised special rates to people enroute to the South Dakota homestead drawing. A lot of free land out there, I thought. At that time I was just past 21 years old! I thought here was my chance, so I got a ticket from Rommney, W. Va., to Gregory, S. D. Rates were one cent a mile for home seekers. It cost 25 cents to register when I got there in October 1911 so I stayed for the drawing. I drew number 85 in the first hundred, but I was able to file on number 71 as several didn't come back and lost their turn. There was something over 120,000 registered at the different places. All trains were packed, people could only stand up. It cost 35 cents for a cot at night, with several in one room.

I came home after the drawing and went back in the spring of 1912 to pick my choice of land in April. I'll write a few of the results and some of the names that I can remember. I was there five years, then came back to West Virginia and didn't take any paper from there until a few years ago so it seems not too many of my neighbors stayed too long and I have lost out on all of the happenings.

Al Wolford

I arrived in Winner, S. D., on Saturday night the last of March 1912, not knowing anyone, but everybody was friendly. On Monday morning I bought a horse and saddle and headed for White River 60 miles away. I went by way of Carter on a straight road but muddy. After Carter it was a winding trail to Wood, so I lost my bearings and went too far south. I saw a rider coming so I asked him the way to Wood. He told me the way and I rode on. It was pay day for the Indians when I arrived in Wood and they were on the move.

Just before I got there I saw someone fixing fence and went over to ask if I was on the right road. It was Alex Bordeaux, Jr.; he was married to Col. Jordan's daughter and as nice a man as I ever met. I hope he is among the living yet.

The next morning I went in to White River, wondering how anybody could pick out a homestead by himself, so I went to Sjoholm & Nolan. When the time came to file, I had my first and second choice picked. I filed on first choice, NE 11 41-28. This was east of White River, just after you get through the Badlands, and was later a part of Pure Water District because of the good water along the valley. Later on, it was called Happy Hollow. I got lumber and my trunk from Winner and moved out right away and built my cabin. Sime Fridy went out the same time but did not build until later, south of White River. I was a bachelor and had never cooked a meal, but I had to learn.

In about a month, the neighbors began to come. More homesteaders came out in the next two years. I will try to name some of them: Art Turners, Pete Petersen, Palmer Brothers, Lige Graham, J. Hardy, Gus Kylen, Housmans, John Glatfelter, Homer Wilson, Noah Gerig, Tom Gallagher, Clara Fox, Walter Gulickson, John Endes, Arch Maxwell, Frank Tisdell, Greenwalt, Charles Bronson, Frank Jarboe, Herman Mohr, Carl Sorensen, Albert Moorhouse, Charles Sjoholm, and Max Steinbach. Most of these got their mail in White River. I see by the paper that Cody Sinning is still out there; he started the Cody Post Office.

We had four bad fires while I was there. The worst one came up from Nebraska at night by Jim Mitchell's. They finally stopped it along the trail from White River to Wood by back firing along the trail before the main fire got there. There was one bad blizzard and that was rough.

Bert Humphrey was mail carrier to Winner. He used a Model T Ford without any body on it, but just boards to which to tie the mail. Of course, there wasn't too much mail then.

Some of the things I remember about the early history of White River: John Hight ran the grocery store. Charles Hight and B. A. Olson were in the White River Bank. Robert Jones and John Falk were in the Mellette County State Bank. L. C. Hodges had the Hardware. Jones ran the hotel. Patnoe had a restaurant. Steve Estes was sheriff and ran the livery barn. Storms had a livery barn. Ted Rohn was marshal. Fletcher was the attorney and C. F. Manson was the judge. C. E. Kell was also attorney while I was there. (He still is.) Mr. Dendy was in the Post Office. Harry Hight, I believe, carried the mail. "Bud" Hight was young then. He did freighting. Marin Georgeff ran the blacksmith shop.

### SPRING THUNDERSHOWER

Storm clouds raced across the sky
  Swished this way and that—
Like the long, furry tail
  Of an angry Persian cat.
Lightning lashed the landscape
  And split air space asunder.
Wind-whipped trees bowed their heads
  As loudly roared the thunder.

They beat upon the fleecy clouds
  'Til they were black and blue
And weeping tears of rain
  As they went scuttling through.
Briefly, as from a wind-tossed veil,
  Peeked the golden sun—
To view the help and the damage
  Our first spring rain had done. —W. R.

# Mr. and Mrs. A. K. Wood

**A. K. Wood, founder of Wood, S. D.**

**Mrs. A. K. Wood**

The story of Mr. and Mrs. Albert Kirk Wood appears in the "Mellette County Memories" book.

* * *

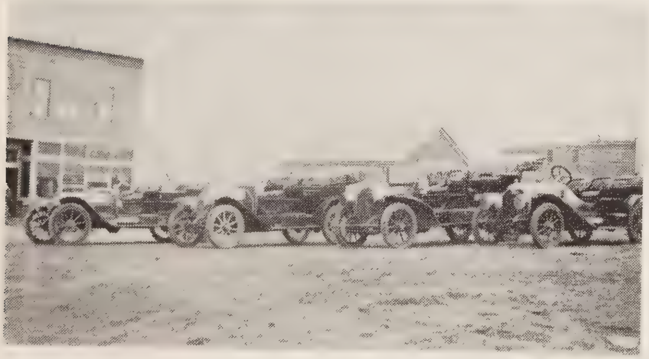
## Wife of Founder of Wood Dies

(From the Winner paper, Nov. 16, 1961):

The wife of the man for whom the town of Wood was named died at 81 at her home in Toledo, Ohio, Friday, after a lengthy illness.

In 1898, Mr. Wood came to the Rosebud country and operated what is now known as the O'Kreek Store. In 1903, Wood went to Culpeper, Va., where he was married to Miss Miller.

The newlyweds then lived in Yankton where they remained about a year. They then returned to the Rosebud and located at Butte Creek Issue Station, south of Wood, S. D.



**First Cars in Wood, S. D.**

In 1912 Wood conceived the idea of laying out the town of Wood, and the Wood Townsite Company was duly organized and incorporated. The present town was laid out and a little frontier town soon sprang into existence. Mr. Wood was also instrumental in getting Mellette County organized and opened for settlement.

He was elected as a county commissioner in 1912 and accomplished much for his district in the way of needed bridges and road work during his short official service on the board.

He was vice-president of the First State Bank of Wood and during his 16 years of residence in the Wood area acquired considerable land.

Mr. Wood's health was broken and after many months of illness, he died at a sanitarium at Silver City, N. M., on February 2, 1914, at the age of 36. Death was an indirect result of a strenuous campaign to make Wood the county seat.

Mrs. Jennie G. Wood was widowed with two daughters.

A few years after her husband died, she moved to live with an uncle in Toledo, Ohio.

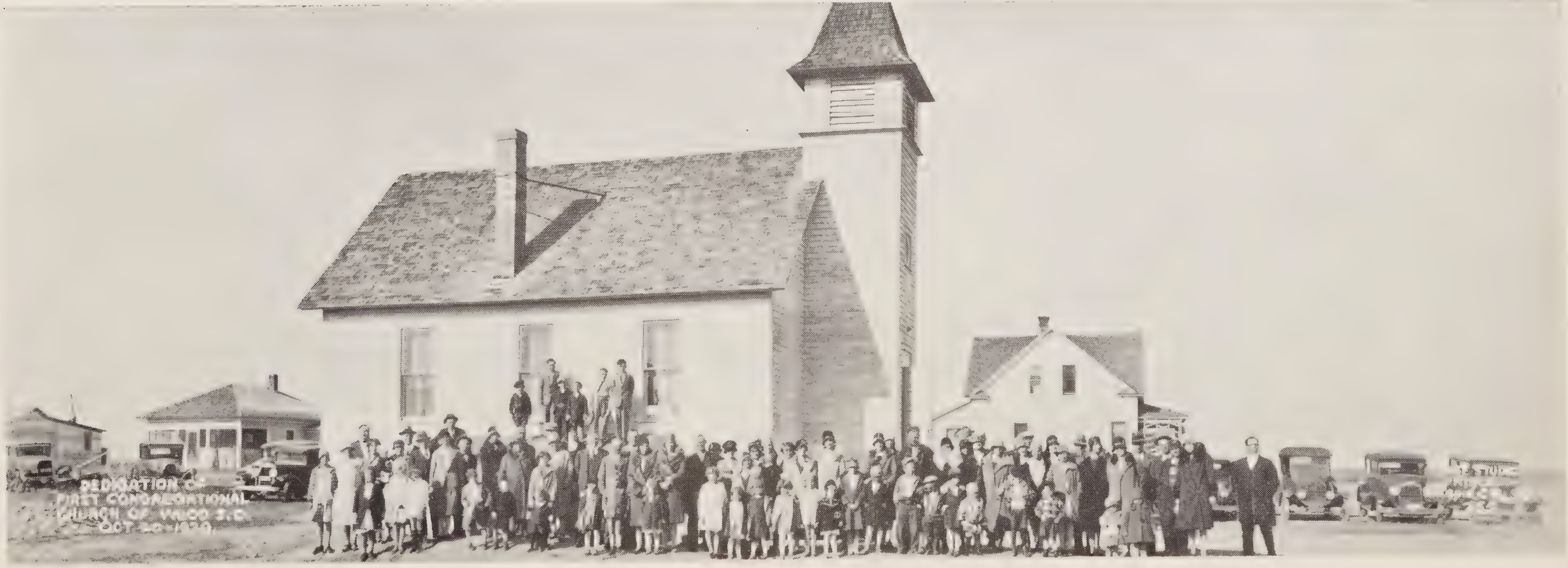
Mrs. Wood was born in Culpeper, Va., and was a graduate of Mary Baldwin College, Stanton, Va. She also attended Peace College in Raleigh, N. C.

Services were held Monday at 11 a.m. in Toledo. Burial was in Oakwood Cemetery, Piqua, Ohio.

She is survived by two daughters, Virginia Wood, Toledo, and Mrs. William (Mary Gray) Haynes, Fremont, Ohio; a brother, Dabney Miller, St. Paul, Minn.; two grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

Bread Baked From
Elkhorn Flour Won First Prize
FIRST ANNUAL MELLETTE COUNTY FAIR
If You Want Good Bread Buy
MINNECHADUZA MILLS Celebrated Brands FLOUR
Elkhorn - $1.50 Niabrara - $1.40 Big Loaf - $1.25
R. P. CARTER, Wanbliciqala, WOOD

Two Special Events in Wood, S. D. Only Railroad in Mellette County. (Both Pictures Courtesy of Mrs. Cody Sinning)


DEDICATION OF
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH OF WOOD S.D.
OCT 20 1929

Happy Hollow Church Moves to Wood, S. D.

# The Yellow Robe Story

Bess Adrian

One of the most interesting and colorful stories of the early pioneer days in Mellette County can be told by Sam Yellow Robe, who lives in the northern part of the county. He lives along the Little White River in what is known as the Westover neighborhood. The Westover Post Office, which was located across the Big White River, in Jones County, has been discontinued, but we still speak of that part of the country as the Westover area. The Government irrigation project, called "Two Kettle," which also has been discontinued, is in the vicinity of Sam's home.

**Sam Yellow Robe, seated; Mrs. Yellow Robe, behind, with their daughter, and Earl Adrian (1961).**

Sam has a remarkable memory and many historical pictures of early day events, and it is very interesting to talk over old times with him.

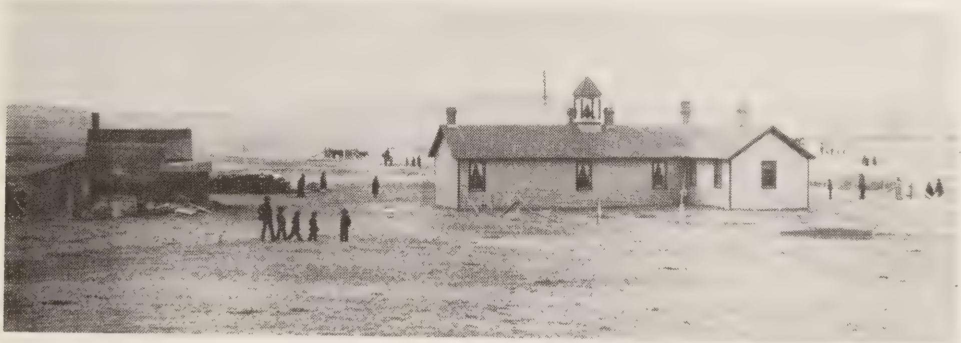
Sam Yellow Robe was born June 26, 1890, at the Lower Cut Meat Indian Camp in southwestern Mellette County, not far from Parmelee, S. D. He was the only son of Mr. and Mrs. Rolls Off Yellow Robe. His father died when he was eight months old and his mother passed away while he was real young. Sam was sent to the Indian Day School at Lower Cut Meat in 1895 when he was only five years old. The old school cistern and a pile of cinders from the coal burned at that school can still be seen in Earl Adrian's south pasture. Sam has a fine picture of that school taken in 1889. On the back of it is an inscription written by his teacher, J. H. Bratley: "To Samuel Yellow Robe, who was a very fine pupil and obedient boy and one whom I always admired. Hope you will get much joy and happiness out of these (pictures)."

One of the other pictures that he sent to Sam shows the patrons of the school. Clyde Otterman's father, Tom Otterman, is among them as his three sons attended the Lower Cut Meat school, too. This Day School continued until about 1912, when most of the Indians had moved onto their allotments and the camp was abandoned.

In 1906 Sam quit school and worked for the 6 L Cattle Outfit near Interior, S. D. Then he came back to Parmelee and started to work for the H E Cattle Company in 1907. Their headquarters was in section 24 40-31, which is now headquarters of the Earl Adrian Ranch. In 1911 they sent Sam, as their "Rep" (Representative of their outfit) to Pine Ridge where the Wyoming wagon (Whitcomb) was rounding up cattle.

The H E Outfit hired large crews throughout the summer but only a few cowboys were kept on their permanent payroll. All cattle outfits hired extra help in the summer to handle the work necessary in looking after their cattle interests. Sam worked on their South line Camp, turning back the H E cattle that drifted down that way.

Sam recalls that in 1910 they camped down in Tripp County below Turtle Butte for three days. The town of Millboro was just being built. There was a large tent up, where groceries were sold until they got a shack built to serve as a store. However, the saloon was the first building completed.



**Story written on the back of the picture of Lower Cut Meat Day School: Name of picture, "The Indians are coming! — to School."**

On the left is stable and wagon shed. Beyond is the carpenter and blacksmith shop. Cord wood in front and beyond the shop. Children coming in from all directions. Mesa that shows over schoolhouse over one mile or more beyond. Just beyond the group of five children in the distance is (southeast) Cougee's (Crow) log house. He was one of our policemen. A lone tree is just beyond. Notice the gate just south of the house. This leads to the pond and irrigated garden. The north wing was the sewing room and schoolroom. They were divided by a partition just south of the belfry. The four rooms in a row on the south were our living quarters. The Government furnished us with 15 cords of good oak wood to cook and keep warm by. Just behind where the camera stood is a big hill and over back of this hill is our 5-acre corn field. We had great experiences here, even with 38-degree below zero weather.

Later Sam worked with others, building dams and roads, then helped the Boss Farmer take a census of the Indian population. His daily wage was $1.25 and he says he was paid in gold.

When Sam was 22 years old he was married to Maggie Turning Hawk of Westover, S. D. They were married on July 2, 1912, by Justice of the Peace Theodore A. Rohn. Witnesses were Richard Jones and Ed Bear Heels.

Mrs. Yellow Robe was the only daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Alex Turning Hawk. She was born March 23, 1890, three miles south of what is now White River, S. D. At the age of five years she attended the Indian Day School which was located at Joe Iyott, Sr.'s place along the Little White River, west of C. B. Gregg's present home. She quit when she was seventeen years old and worked for the Day School Teacher for $1.25 per day.

**Alex Turning Hawk and his wife, Mrs. Sam Yellow Robe's mother and father, about 1908.**

Yellow Robes remember that the school schedule was half a day spent in studying out of their school books and the remainder of the day was spent in general education. During this period the girls learned to cook, wash, sew and keep house. The boys were taught gardening, how to take care of cattle, shop work and general dairy work.

Mr. and Mrs. Yellow Robe have lived on their place from 1912 to the present time. They have been flooded out of their house by the river three different times so far. March of 1960 was the worst, when the water was one and a half feet deep in their house. They managed to get to the town of White River and stayed there for ten days until the flood waters went down. Sam has a white building, on a high bluff west of his house, that he says he will move into if it floods again.

Mr. and Mrs. Yellow Robe had five children: Cecelia, Alvin, Louis, Clarence and Gladys.

The Yellow Robes wanted their children to have a good education, so they personally paid the tuition so the children could attend high school in White River. This was in the days before the school districts paid the tuition as they do now.

Sam has a cousin in New York, by the name of Doctor Evelyn Yellow Robe, who has her Ph.D. and her sister, Chaucina Yellow Robe, works in a Government office. Their father was a teacher in Rapid City, S. D.

Mrs. and Mrs. Yellow Robe have raised their children in the Episcopal faith and attend services regularly.

Their yard is beautiful in summer with cedar trees trimmed in cone shape and many flowers. Mrs. Yellow Robe has won prizes for her flowers and vegetables. She is also a very good seamstress and housekeeper.

Sam farmed until 1958 when he had to have his left leg amputated due to a diabetic condition that he has had since 1948. Sam has an artificial leg now and gets around real well. He still drives his car to town.

So the old time cowboy, Sam Yellow Robe, like a lot of other cowboys of yesteryears, has traded his horse and spurs for an automobile to ride around in Mellette County.

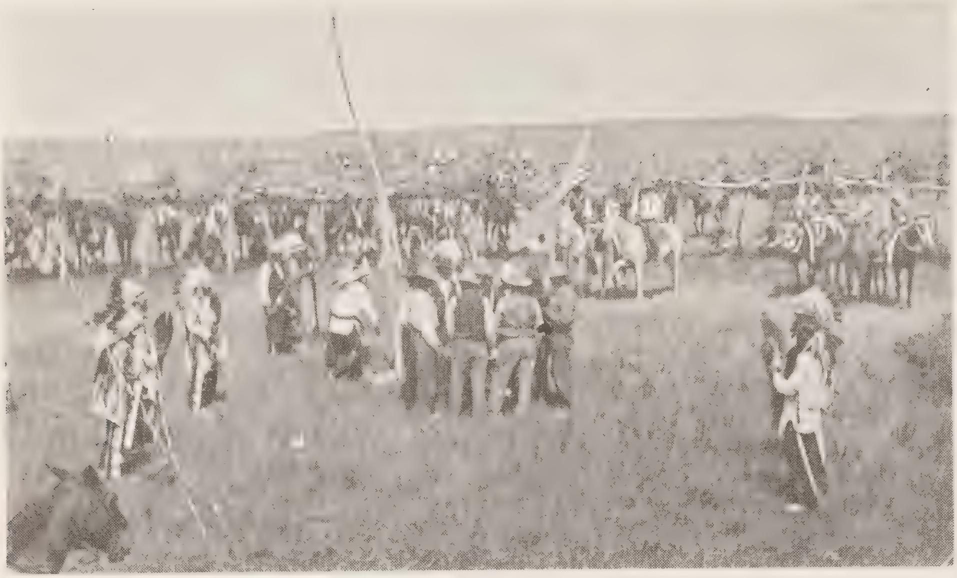
**Cut Meat Day School, 1895-1896**

**On horseback,** Policeman John Search the Enemy. **Back row:** Joe Yellow Robe, Turning Wood, Kitty Turning Eagle, Julia Broken Legs, Henry Good Bird, Emma Looks Back, Eliza Sleeping Bear, Frank Sleeping Bear, Edith Otterman, Jennie Greyhound. **Second row:** Charley New, Claudie Blue Horse, Nellie Foot, Maudie Plenty Holes, Gracie Good Bird, Maggie Otterman, Rosa Elk Teeth, Helen Search the Enemy. **Third row:** Charles Little Dog, Freddie Sitting Bear, David Elk-Looks-Back, Eddie Foot, Lee Wood, Tommy Otterman, Willie Elk Teeth, Stella Good Bird, Hattie With Horns, Alice Slow Fly. **Front row:** Sam Slow Fly, Silas Plenty Holes, Chas. Black Calf, George Kills Plenty, Sam Yellow Robe, Nat Elk Teeth. (Sam Yellow Robe still lives in Mellette County. It was through information from him that Mrs. Adrian contacted Bratleys, who sent their story.)

George Burning Breast,
Ben Reifel's Uncle

Dewey Beard

Sallie Stabber

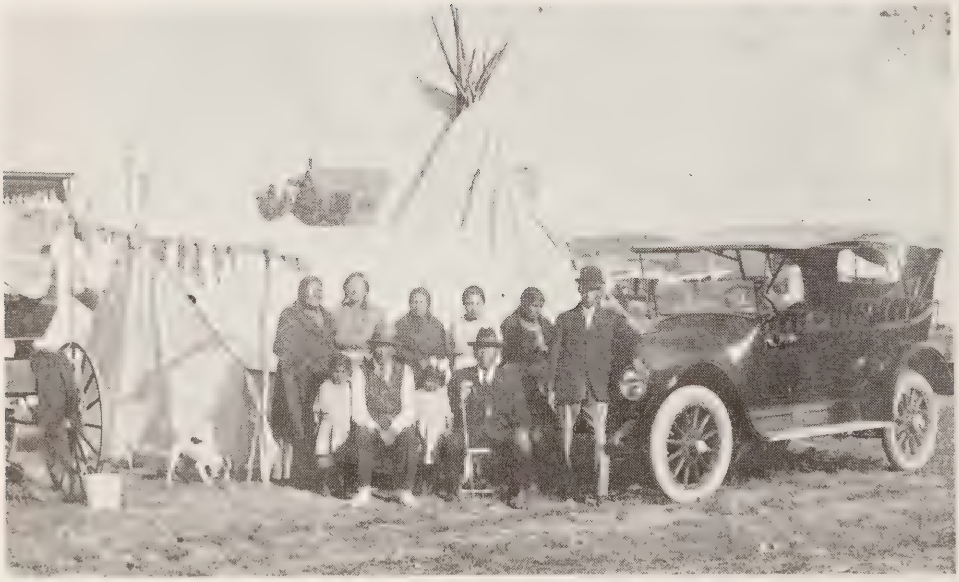


Sun Dance at Parmelee, 1912

Drummers near center pole. Indian Dances are still held in Mellette County every summer.

When White River was only a tent "City."

WHITE RIVER, S.D.

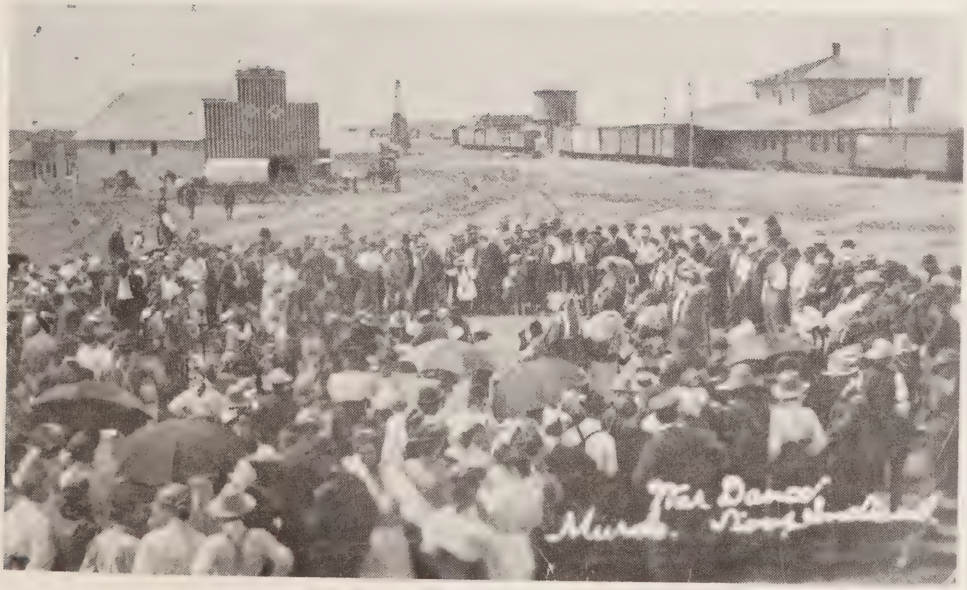


Jerked beef drying on the line. Notice "Surrey with the Fringe on Top" at left.

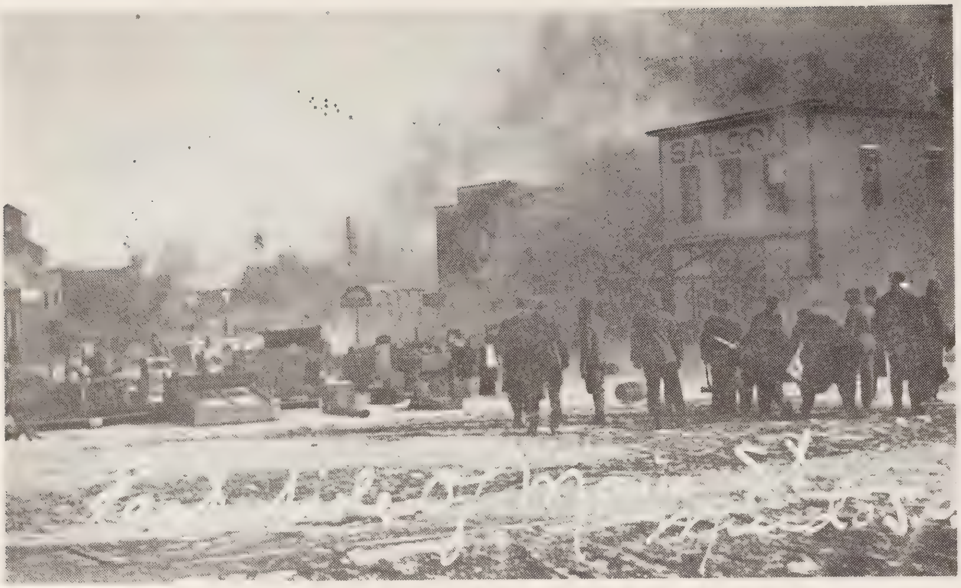
Cowboys ready for the Roundup, in open range days.

COWGIRLS AND COWBOYS BOTH GAVE SPECTATORS LOTS OF EXCITEMENT AT THE "FRONTIER DAYS" CELEBRATION IN WHITE RIVER EVERY AUGUST.

Mildred Douglas riding wild steer.

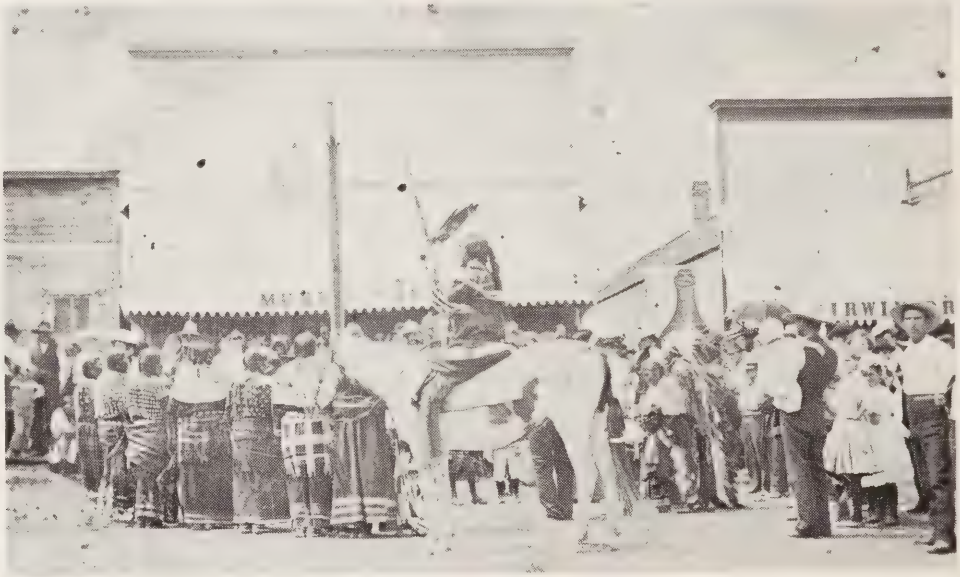

War Dance
Murdo. South Dakota

Early Days
At Murdo, S. D.

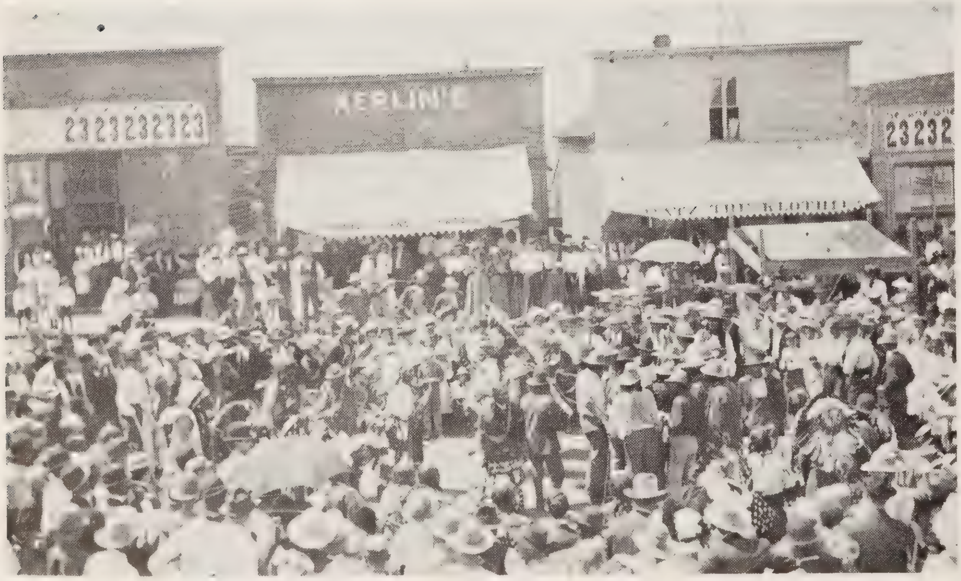


East Side of Main St.,
Murdo, S. D.

Murdo's Big Fire



William Sharp Butte's father on horseback, Murdo, 1908.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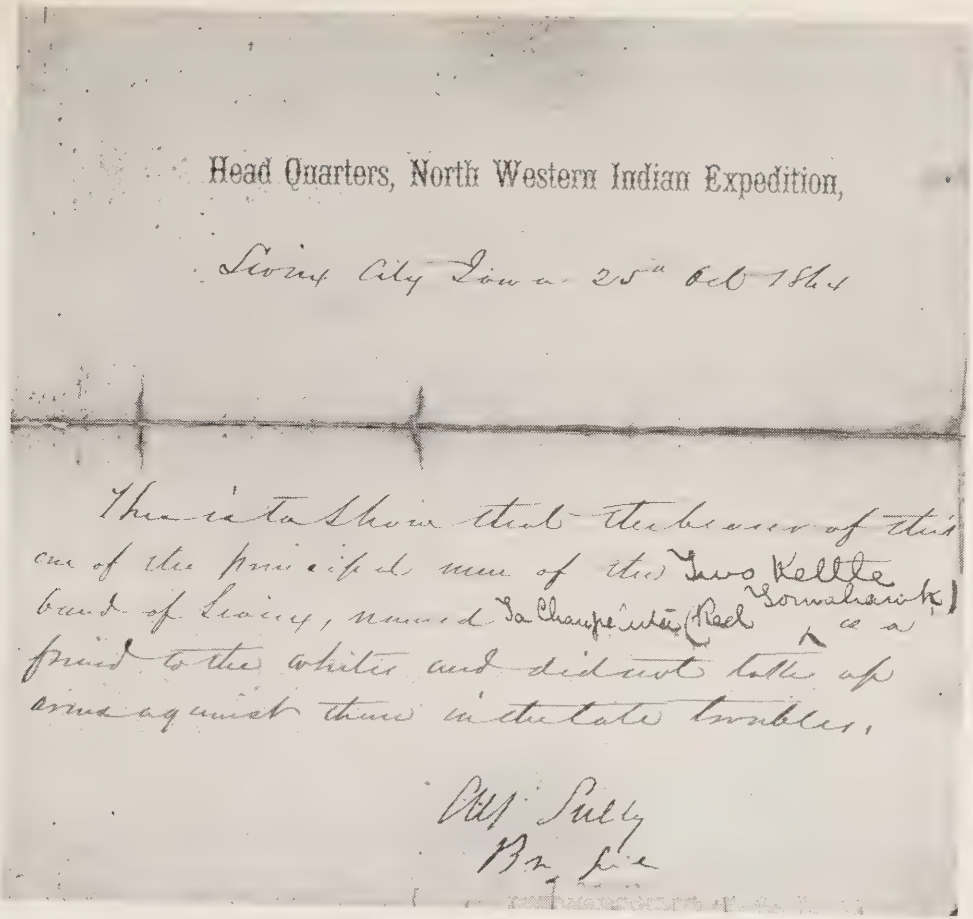
KERLIN'S

Murdo, S. D.

— Early Celebration —



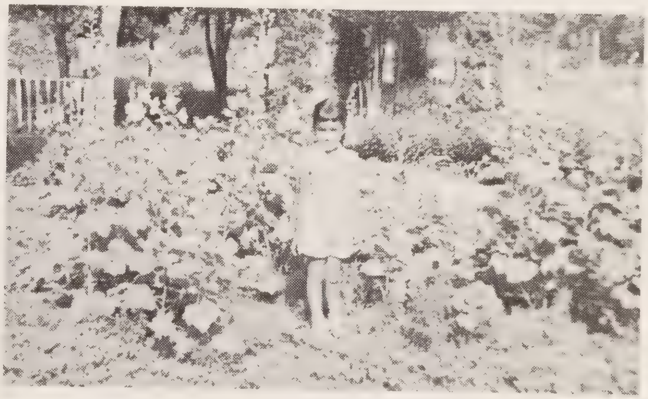
Head Quarters, North Western Indian Expedition,

Sioux City Iowa 25th Oct 1864

This is to show that the bearer of this one of the principal men of the Two Kettle band of Sioux, named Ta Chaupe ute (Red Tomahawk) is a friend to the whites and did not take up arms against them in the late troubles.

Alf Sully
Br Ge

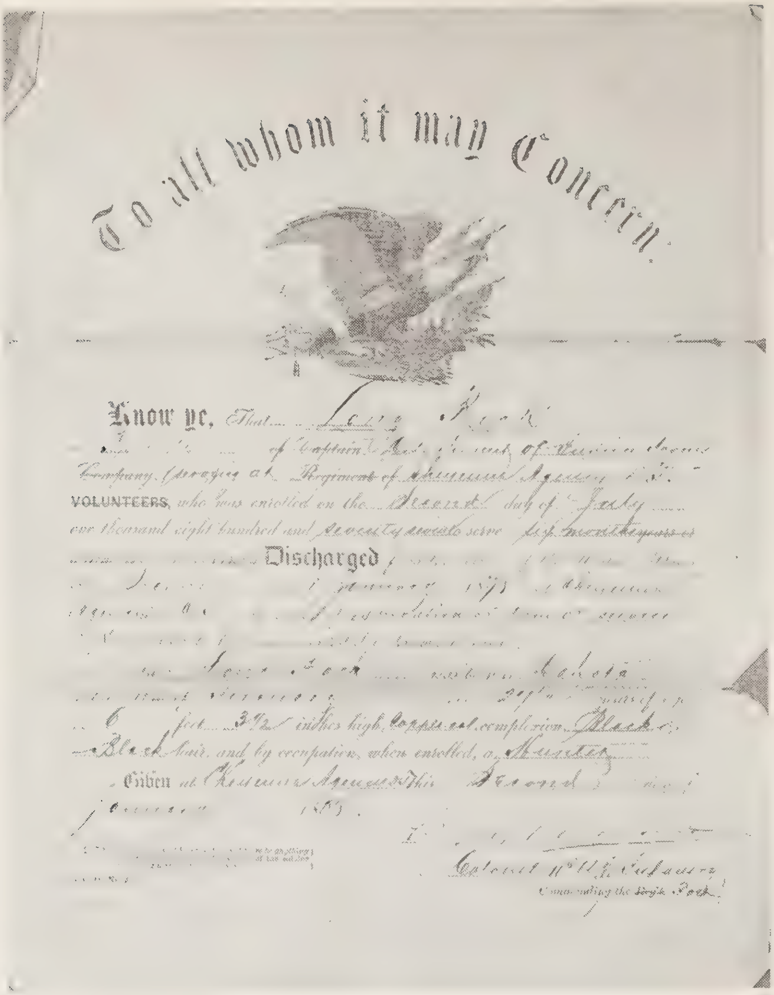
One of the valuable historical items in Yellow Robe's collection.



Picture of Mrs. Sam Yellow Robe's yard.

Minnie Whipple Otterman and her sister, Rose Whipple Janis, with their grandchildren "dressed up" as papooses. Picture taken close to Parmelee, S. D. Both are daughters of Jack Whipple.

Upper Pine Creek Day School over in what is now Robert Adrian's pasture.



To all whom it may Concern.

Know ye, That

VOLUNTEERS, who was enrolled on the Second day of July

one thousand eight hundred and seventy

Discharged

6 feet 3½ inches high, complexion, Black eyes,

Black hair, and by occupation, when enrolled, a Hunter

Given at

Colonel 11th Infantry

Commanding the Post.

Yellow Robe's Document

# The Zimmerman Story

**By Mrs. Ruby Zimmerman**

George Louis Zimmerman was born October 6, 1884 in Webster County, Deer Creek Township, Fort Dodge, Iowa. He graduated from Tobin College in 1903.

His first position was with an insurance company; in 1903-04 he taught school in Iowa. At the close of school he went to Aberdeen, S. D., where he worked for the Wells Fargo Express Company.

In September 1906 he taught an eight months term at Ipswich, S. D. About this time, the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad started an extension of their line from Mobridge, S. D., toward the Pacific Coast. Mr. Zimmerman did clerical work for the railroad, first at Aberdeen, S. D., then Miles City, Mont., and lastly at Roundup, Mont. From there he went to Pierre, S. D., where he filed on a homestead in Stanley County described as N½ of NW¼ 13, E½ of NE¼ 14, in Township 8 N Range 27 E., Black Hills Meridian, 160 acres.

While residing on this homestead his Post Office address was Lacy, S. D. He made a commuted homestead proof on December 19, 1911, and received his patent No. 270007 the 27th day of May 1912.

He used a horse and buggy for transportation between his homestead and Fort Pierre, then the ferry boat between Fort Pierre and Pierre. After making proof he went to Britton, S. D., where he and Ruby Elsom were married on January 1, 1912. Their first home was at Avery, Idaho, a division point on the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad. Here he did clerical work in a round house, sometimes ran the wrecking crane when they went out to pick up wrecks, or cooked for the wrecking crew.

After a year and a half he took his wife and baby son, Eugene, to Aberdeen, S. D., where he continued to work on the railroad for five years.

Then the homestead law, allowing additional homesteads, was passed. The vicinity of Buffalo, Wyo., was chosen because hunting and fishing opportunities were easily accessable from that homestead territory.

Mrs. Zimmerman filed on 160 acres additional to the Montana homestead of 160 acres. When the required residence was completed on it, Mr. Zimmerman filed on a 480 acre additional, to the 160 acre homestead in Stanley County, S. D.

The dry summer of 1919 came, followed by a heavy snowfall during the winter of 1919-20, causing many homesteaders to move to the oil fields to get work to provide a living for their families. Seven months leave of absence was allowed that winter from the homestead and how we did appreciate that leave of absence.

**Mrs. Ruby Elsom Zimmerman in center. Left, daughter, Ruby, and her husband, Russell Wright, of Buffalo, Wyo., and on her right are Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Zimmerman of White River.**

Weather conditions improved and in a few years many homesteaders started small sheep and cattle ranches.

My father, George Albert Elsom, also was an early homesteader. He was married to Esther Maloney at Friendship, Wisc., on January 1, 1884. They came to Britton in Dakota Territory, filing on a homestead in Marshall County to establish their new home. In 1889 the Dakota Territory was divided and North and South Dakota were admitted as new states.

Mr. Elsom continued to live on this homestead farm with his family of three daughters and four sons until his death on July 8, 1949. Had he lived one day longer he would have celebrated his ninetieth birthday.

During his lifetime he helped organize a co-operative creamery and later the Farmers Co-operative Grain Company which he served as president for 30 years. He also spent several terms as county commissioner.

In the early pioneer days he used oxen to break the soil as well as for transportation. Then horses and later tractors and automobiles were used.

* * *

Note: The above story of homesteading days was written by the mother of Eugene Zimmerman, who is efficiently serving as the present County Agent of Mellette County (1961).

Other Mellette County Agents were C. H. Blakely, 3-10-1918 to 7-1-1919; Emmit Bush 4-16-1918 to 6-30-1918; F. E. Lange 2-16-1920 to 6-30-1921; A. S. Gray 7-1-1921 to 7-1-1922; E. G. Rudolph 8-1-1922 to 5-31-1924; W. P. Henke 8-15-1933 to 10-31-1942; Paul C. Underwood 9-18-1933 to 3-31-1934; Ed Swanson February 1955 to July 1956, when Eugene Zimmerman took office. W. R.

**Grandma Zimmerman, at right, with her grandchildren, taken Christmas 1960. Left to right: Rowena and Raymond Wright, Mary Zimmerman holding Ronald Wright, Georgia Zimmerman holding Rita Wright, and Grandma.**

**Eugene Zimmerman, third man from left, wearing a cap. Weighing calves at Dwight Schaeffer's ranch. Earl Brown by chute and Bud Brown at right, both facing camera.**

## SOUTH DAKOTA — CHOSEN STATE

Give me a spot in God's outdoors
To work in and to dream.
Where one trusts God,
And men are what they seem.
With flowers and trees and pleasant toil
I'll never care to roam—
From South Dakota, Sunshine State,
My western prairie home.

—Winifred Reutter, 1926

# "SHORT WESTERN STORIES AND PICTURES"

## The Bad Nation Trail

**As told to Winifred Reutter by An Oldtimer**

This well-known Indian Trail, that angles north and south across the eastern half of Mellette County, is said to have existed at least one hundred years before there was even a Bad Nation Indian Camp. I got my information from an old long-haired Indian that couldn't speak more than a dozen words of English. We could only visit with the aid of an interpreter. He was one of the only two Indians I have ever met who claimed any knowledge of this country before they were forced back on to the Reservations. Both of these old men told pretty much the same story. This was that their family band or tribe followed the buffalo on their annual trips. These bands usually wintered along the Platte River and in the summer they made camp along the Missouri between Chamberlain and Pierre.

One of these men said his family band always came up north through Western Tripp County and used the Pahapesto Butte for a guide point. Both these old fellows said that this annual migration, spring and fall, had been practiced most years from the time the Sioux drove out the Rees and Mandans who retreated into North Dakota.

Up until 1890 at least, the Sioux had no wagons so camp equipment was hauled, on their journeys, on travios. Travios were two poles that were fastened to a surcingle or rawhide thong around the horse, one pole on each side with the ends dragging on the ground. Short branches were laid cross-wise on these poles, like steps on a ladder. On this, the squaws placed their tents, furs and bundles containing all their worldly possessions.

According to these old Indian legends, the dragging poles cut away the grass, this let the wind and water erode the soil and leave the tracks that the travelers followed over the years. He said it was mostly from the vicinity of Wood to the White River that the trail was so plain. The reason was that the lay of the land held the travel in this area to a more narrow channel. From a high vantage point, signs of these old trails are still visible.

The old man told me that the Indians did not like to climb steep hills or cross deep gulches and they took this into consideration when making their trails. I doubt if a surveyor could have laid out a better route than this one, under these specifications.

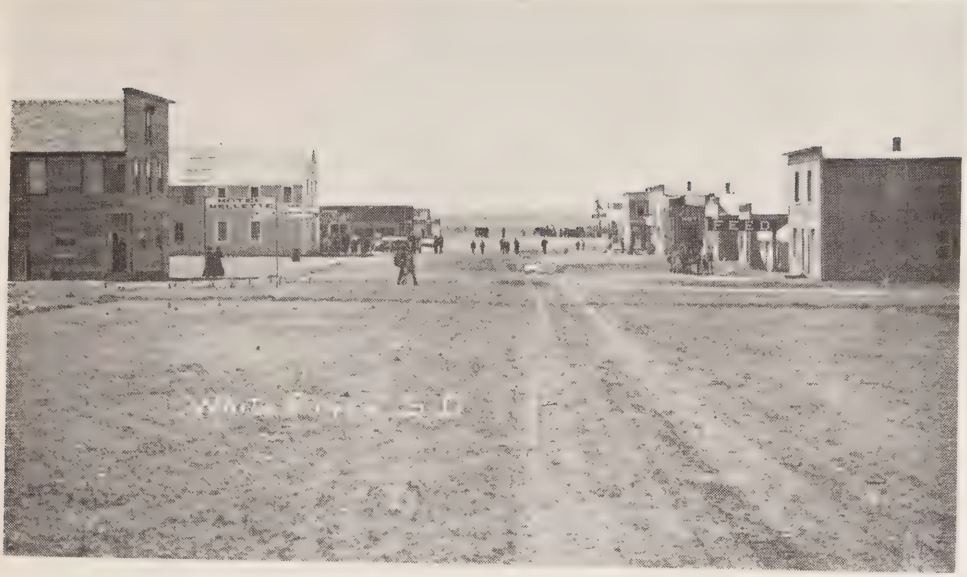
The Bad Nation Camp was located on the trail mainly because of a never-failing spring half way down the gulch on the south side. After the camp came into being, traffic from it to Little Crow Camp or to Wood went on the cross country routes until the White settlers commenced to put fences across it.

North of the Bad Nation Camp, the Indian people also traveled over the same route for a long, long time. A lot of these people had relatives on the Brule and Crow Creek Reservations north of Chamberlain. And that meant a lot of visiting and traveling back and forth.

**George Whirlwind Soldier and Edmund Little Bald Eagle with Vickie Sinkler of Wood, S. D. Taken in 1958.**
(H. Piper picture)

**A celebration (maybe 4th of July) before 1918, at Bad Nation Camp.**

There were two main places where they crossed the Big White River. This is the way the old fellow explained it; "Go north, down steep hill—easy up north side. You come south, use other road. Step down on north side, easy out on the south side." There you have it, one way traffic and divided travel lanes, at least seventy years before the days of Super Highways in South Dakota.

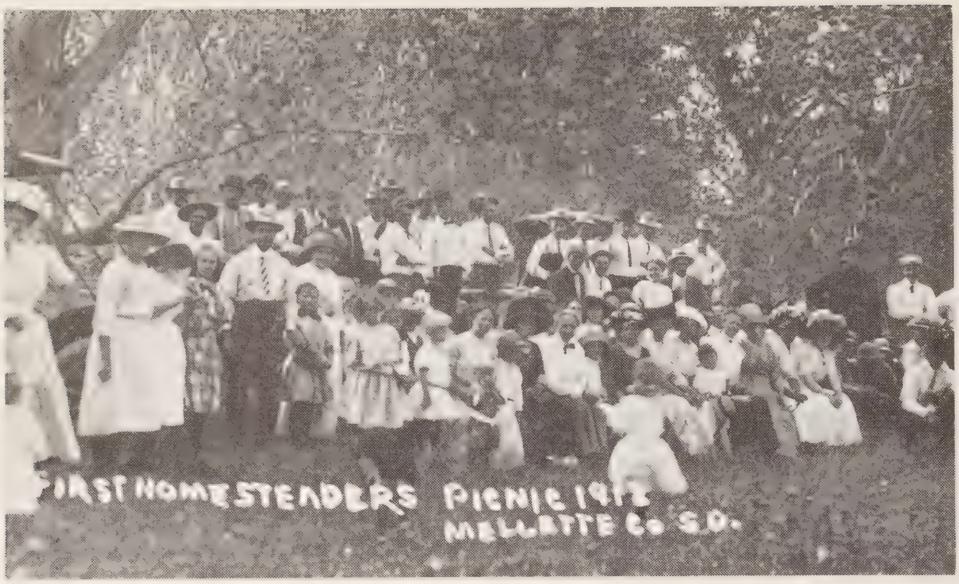


# Early White River Pictures

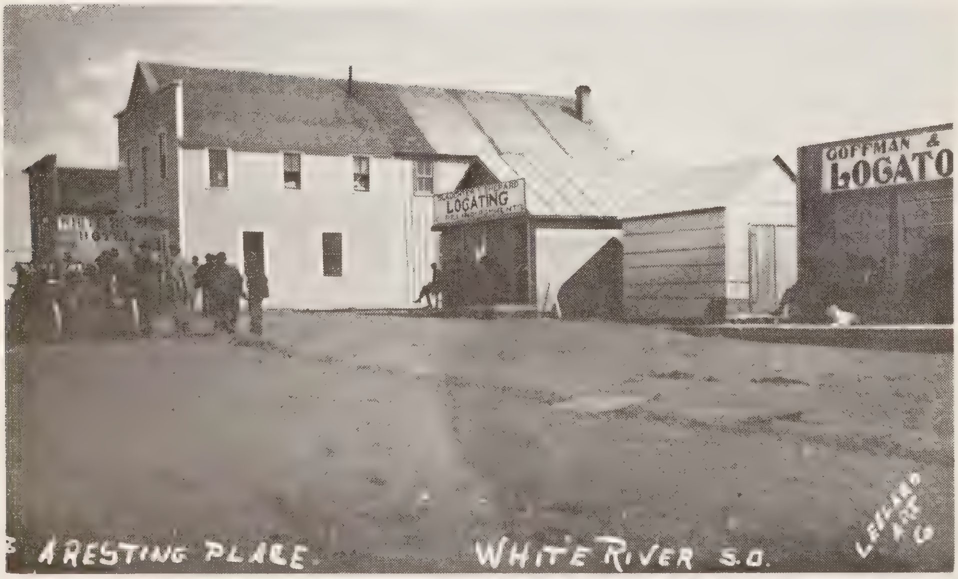
(From Jim Wilder)

First School, White River, 1912

First Teachers' Normal Institute of Mellette County, July 26-31, 1913, at White River, S. D.


FIRST HOMESTEADERS PICNIC 1912
MELLATTE Co S.D.

Early White River School, 1912


HOTEL
LOCATING
GOFFMAN &
LOCATO
A RESTING PLACE.
WHITE RIVER S.D.

Tomsik Hotel

Frontier Days, White River, S. D., Sept. 13-15, 1916

— Baseball Game —

Election Day in White River

Indians having a "coffee break."

First Frontier Days Grandstand, near schoolhouse. Later held north of White River.

—Pictures courtesy of Jim Wilder

# Timber Wolves

### By John Tripp, Jr.

Now here is the story of my observation of timber wolves.

I was on my way home from the Whitfield ranch on the Big White (later the Porch ranch) to my home on Black Pipe. The date must have been about 1897. The horses were jogging along at a slow trot. It was a bright sunny day in the late summer or early fall with little or no wind.

Off to my right I noticed a bunch of 50 or so cattle feeding. I gave them little attention until they all started to run toward a common center. All, that is, except one. It was going away from the rest of the herd. Then I really took notice and saw that a timber wolf was a short distance back of it, following it not too close. As they moved away down a small "draw," other wolves appeared along the tops of the draw and slowly closed in behind. They made no effort to catch up with the beef, but as with the first wolf, stayed some distance, a few rods apparently back of it. Finally they disappeared from my sight down the draw into the Bad Lands. Meantime the other cattle had gone back to quietly feeding.

This is the way I figure it out. The first wolf had managed to sneak up and get between its intended prey and the rest of the herd, thus cutting it out from them. This beef would have only one place to go and the wolf followed. Then the rest of the hunting party of wolves joined in. All this was done very quietly so as not to alarm the cattle. The kill was made at some great distance for the same reason. To me the whole affair had the appearance of a well-planned hunt for needed food. Of course I do not know whether it was a steer or a cow that the wolves got, but I do know that it was a fully grown animal.

# The U-Cross Cowboys at Red Hill and Old Witten

### As told to Winifred Reutter by an Oldtimer

In 1909 I arrived at Witten (this later became Old Witten), just at dusk on November 2nd. We were just eating, or trying to eat, a couple of tough steaks when there was a sudden pistol shot. Quickly there were a half dozen more shots and the clatter of several fast running horses.

Immediately, I thought of all the Wild West stories and Wild Life tales that I'd ever read or heard of.

I think I would have dived under the table if I could have. But we were sitting on a couple of high stools at a home-made counter that didn't even have an undercut to accommodate the customer's knees, to say nothing of giving him a place to hide.

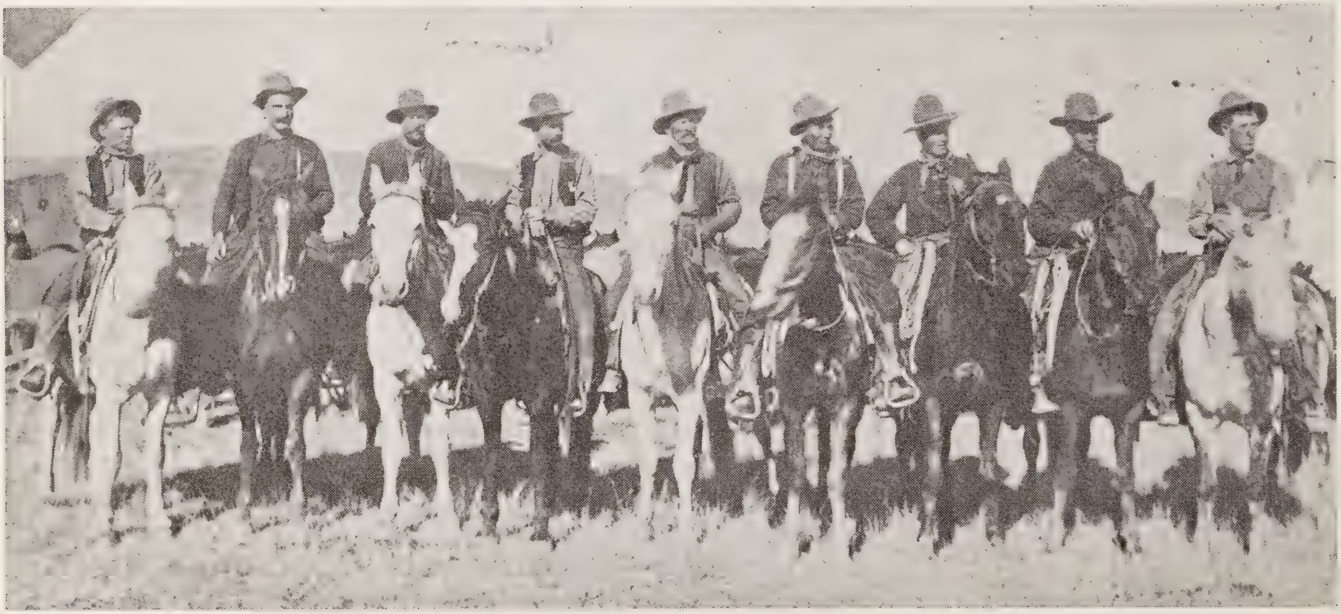
Unconcerned, the counter man said, "Well, the U Cross boys are in town early tonight."

The U Cross was a large cattle company that had a sizable layout in Tripp County, mostly on leases of Indian land.

The waiter told us what was going on. All the ranchers had received notice to have their stock off of the Indian Reservation by a certain date. The U Cross outfit was leaving early. They had their main camp and holding ground about four miles south of town. Some of their young cattle were being moved to a ranch in Nebraska, around three hundred miles to the southwest.

According to the story this man told us, a lot of the better heifers and young cows were being shipped to the Argentine. This was an experiment to see how they would get along in that country. I never found out if they did go or how it turned out. I did hear that they sold their Nebraska outfit about the time of the end of World War I.

Anyway, this night in Witten, I don't recall whether I finished that steak or not. Because after I found the shooting was all in fun, I wanted to see all the show I could.



**Last U+ Roundup in Tripp County, 1909. Left to right, U+ cowboys are: Curly Lanz, Billie Brown (foreman), Joe Ludwig, Seth Brothers (Jay on right), Paul Lamoreaux, Buster Brown, Foster Berry (brother of S. Dak.'s cowboy governor, Tom Berry), and Clark Campbell. Picture taken north of Dog Ear Lake.**

—Morganfield picture

These U Cross riders (four of them) were running horses to see who had to pay for the drinks. After the first race, they gave the losing horses a head start of about the distance they had finished behind the other horses in the heat before.

One of the saloons had built a ramp out of its front door and had laid an upper floor of two inch lumber, so that the boys could ride right up to the bar for their liquor without having to dismount. This was curb service in 1909. These races were only about a block long. They were more of a test in quick starting than in speed. Or maybe that was as long as the cowboys could stand it between drinks.

I finally went to bed and imagine my surprise the next morning to find that we weren't in Witten at all but in a rival townsite of Red Hill. Some speculators had set up Red Hill as a scheme to make a few dollars. These same Jackson Brothers started many other townsites. Some of the towns they started are still flourishing but many of them have failed.

Next summer, Red Hill moved the 80 rods or so into what is now the old Witten townsite. We were told that the combination of the two towns now had four banks, four grocery stores, four hardware stores, four saloons, two pool halls, two barber shops and two eating joints. But neither a school or a church.

Most of the business men were also homesteading as a side line so that there were only four men who could have been legally entitled to vote in a municipal election. Hence no town Government. They did have a Justice of the Peace and a Deputy Sheriff appointed by the Tripp County set-up in Lamro. I should add that two of the saloons had to close after the towns were united as the State law only allowed two to a town of under two thousand population. The banks finally consolidated into two, and to the childrens' grief schools finally began.

# Building the Government Fence

**As told to Winifred Reutter by an Oldtimer**

I don't remember that there ever was a real Government fence between Tripp and Mellette Counties. By the time I came out here it was the Government policy to let the Indians mix with the Whites as much as possible. It was part of a plan to get them to observe the White man's ways and to absorb this free knowledge for their own use. There were almost as many Sioux living on their allotments in Tripp County as in Mellette County.

The Indians, who wanted it, were given farm machinery. Most of them would put in a few acres of corn. But by the time it needed cultivating, the roads would also be in good shape to travel and they would get the urge to go visiting or to a church meeting. By the time they got back home the weeds would about have taken over or stray horses or cattle might have eaten it.

Most of Tripp County had been leased for pasture to White men or big cattle companies like the U Cross. These outfits were required to fence the pastures they leased and, I think, the minimum was at least a four wire fence. Then were permitted to use native posts cut anywhere within their lease but were required to hire Indian labor. Those living within the leased area were to be given a preference if they wanted to work.

The Township of Pahapesto had been leased by a big cattle outfit. One of the men told me this story about the fence building.

They had a gang cut the posts in the late winter along Cottonwood Creek. One thing and another delayed the fence work in the spring. The wage deal was set up by the Indian Agent. One dollar cash a day with a certain amount of meat and other rations to be furnished. All of which, and the price of the wire, could be applied against the rent of the land during the fifth year of the lease. However the fence was to be confiscated if the renter failed to meet any of the earlier rental payments.

Payment was made each evening in silver. The third morning when he rode up to oversee his gang there were a half dozen of their wives out there. They, too, wanted to get in on that easy money. He didn't want to turn them down flat, so told them that he had no spades or post augers for them. They had a little conference among themselves and finally they walked back to their camp.

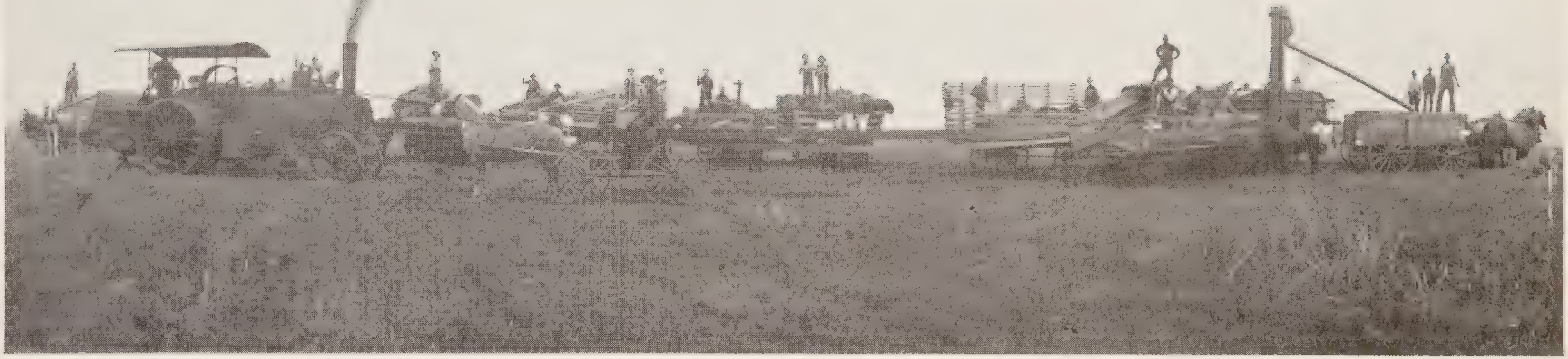
The next morning when he got in sight he saw that the girls were back and each one of them was down on her knees beside one of the places that had been marked for post holes. Evidently, they had decided if he didn't have tools for them they would furnish their own as each one had one of those old style, large iron spoons about fifteen inches long. He figured that the cost of the job would go on the rent eventually, anyhow, so he let them go ahead as he thought they would soon tire.

The second day the squaws had the bad luck to draw a series of holes across an old hard-pan flat. However they all dug their post holes the required 18 inches deep but most of them cost a dollar a post hole. He didn't think the girls would ever show up again.

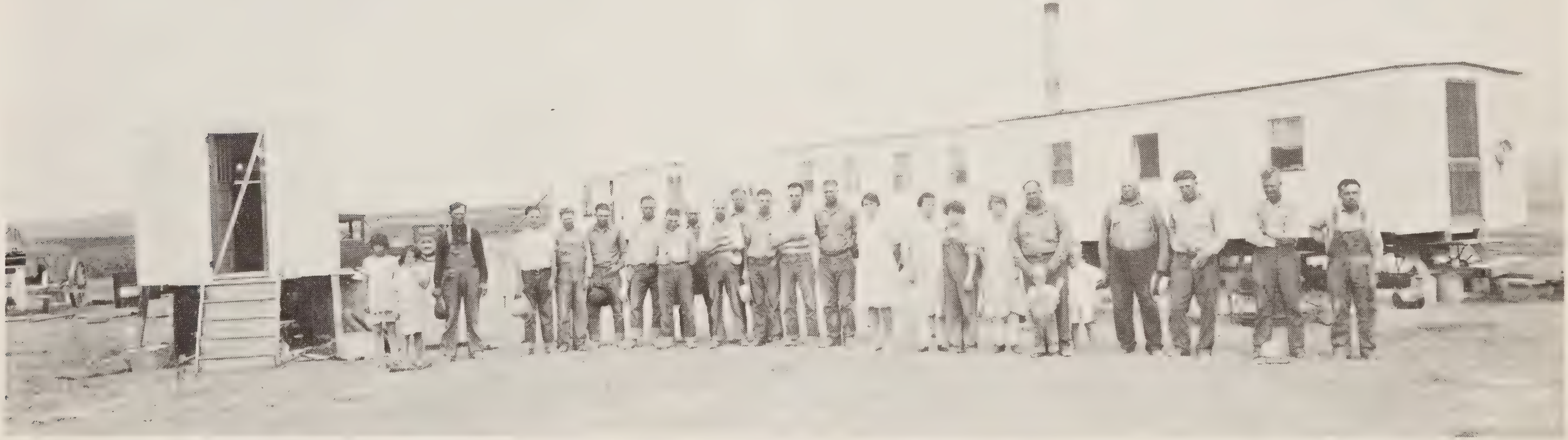
It was late when he arrived the next morning and he noticed right away that the women had taken over supervision of the job. They were now using the augers he had issued to their husbands and had detailed the men to haul, set and tamp the posts and put on the wire. This system worked out fine. The girls dug all the holes until they met the gang that his brother was pushing from the other side of the leased area.

Later on these fences from all leased land were sold at an appraised price, in mile lots, at so much a mile. A homesteader could take only a half mile, providing it was on his boundary line. When it happened that two or more wanted the same mile it was put up at auction.

There was a Government fence on the west side of the Pine Ridge Reservation. It was just over a quarter of a mile from one of the gates. There was a printed sign tacked to the gate post. I don't remember the exact wording but it was to the effect that this was Indian Department property and anyone failing to close the gate would be subject to a hundred dollar fine. This sign was renewed at least once a year, but a couple of miles south another gate was never posted at all. There was never any charge for entering, anywhere, that I heard of there, but a White man was supposed to have a legitimate business if he came onto the Reservation, in the early days.



Threshing in the "Good Old Days." Picture from Willis Dickson. Notice header racks used there.



G. W. England and sons, contractors, grading crew on C. & N. W. R. R. from Winner to Wood. Train arrived in Wood, October 1929
(Picture from Willis Dickson, Wood, S. D.)

G. W. England and sons, contractors, grading crew on C. & N. W. R. R. from Winner t
(Picture from Willis Dickson, Wood, S.

White River is known far and wide for its celebration and rodeo called Frontier Days.

Al Reynolds from Murdo at the Territorial Centennial and 50th Anniversary Celebration at White River, Aug. 19, 1961.

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# Westover History and the Don Hight Cattle Drive

By Winifred Reutter

Westover is now only one of the many Ghost Towns of South Dakota. It never was a big town at all, just a combination Post Office and general store with living quarters in the rear. The hitching posts which were out front during the early Dakota days were eventually replaced by gas pumps and it was moved several times to various locations, usually to be closer to a road, but otherwise it changed very little during the years from 1891 to 1957.

Westover Post Office was officially closed in October 1957 and then Westover was almost forgotten until January 1962 when Don Hight made a big cattle drive that received nation-wide publicity, from his ranch near there.

I have always been interested in stories of events that took place in the area around Westover, probably because my dad worked as a carpenter on the Community Hall when it was built there. Westover territory is rich in early Dakota history and I would welcome more historical information about it from readers.

Westover's last location was just north of the Mellette County line near the Big White River in what is now Jones County. There was a good well-known river crossing east of there. The old-timers tell me that the crossing was known as the Westover Crossing long before the Post Office was officially named Westover. Good river crossings were important in the days of horse and wagon transportation before bridges spanned the rivers. The river bed had to be quite solid and free of quicksand with the hills on both sides not too steep for the loaded freight wagons to be pulled up. One old-timer insists there was also a store located farther east that was called Eastover. I've not been able to verify this, but by reading the Steiner story and others in this book we know there was a homestead store somewhere in northeastern Mellette County for a while. In the Bad Nation Trails article there is mention of the east crossing on the Big White River. So the expressions; West (crossing) over, and the East (crossing) over, seem like as good a way for the name "Westover" to get started as any other explaination I've heard.

The earliest historical event about the Westover area in my files is the Encampment of Sioux Indians on the river bottom land at the forks of the Little and Big White Rivers, in what is now Mellette County, during the winter of 1877-78. The man in charge of this expedition was Col. C. P. Jordan. He was later very prominent in the organization of Mellette County. His title of Colonel was an honorary one, conferred upon him by a congressional order in recognition of his bravery and special services. He was only a young man of 27 at the time of the encampment but certainly was responsible and carried out his duties well. A copy of the Rosebud Review, April 1916, contains an article written by Col. C. P. Jordan. His son, Wm. W. Jordan of Mission, gave me permission to use it in this book. Excerpts, from the long historical article, pertaining to what later became the Westover country, follow:

"EXODUS," by Col. Charles P. Jordan

Following the Sioux War of 1876, it was decided by the Government to move the Ogalalla (Red Cloud) and the Brule (Spotted Tail) Sioux to the Indian Territory or some place in the interior of S. D. (It was Dakota Territory at that time.) This location was to be later decided upon. . . . The Indians bitterly opposed removal to the Missouri River as was desired by officials of the Indian Department. They were informed however, that all their supplies were delivered at a point on the (Missouri) river where it had been decided to locate their new agencies, and that they would have to move there or near there, but that in the following spring they would be transferred to any place they might select.

**Chief Swift Bear and Col. C. P. Jordan. Chief Swift Bear and Chief Spotted Tail were the principal chiefs of the Brule Band. The latter was killed in 1881 by Crow Dog as a result of enmity between the two.**

The two bands were accordingly moved in November 1877. As I (Jordan) was with the Ogalallas as their chief clerk, I will deal only with their movements. We started the Exodus from the old Red Cloud Agency near Fort Robinson. We had some 10,000 people, a party of soldiers, two companies of cavalry under Captain Lawson, Indian traders and camp followers, 2,000 head of cattle, a Government mule train with military supplies and a large bull train loaded with Indian rations. We were enroute 31 days making a distance of 235 miles, locating our Indians at the forks of the White River and the military train, also the Indian agent and staff proceeded on to the Missouri River some 65 miles farther east where headquarters were established. . . .

Jordan goes on to tell that, when spring came, the Indian Commissioner still was determined to relocate the Indians on the Missouri River instead of letting them go where they wished as previously promised. He gives a lengthy account of couriers riding back and forth with messages for various Government officials. All to no avail, although provisions were running low in the encampment. Eventually, Jordan himself, went to headquarters to try to straighten out the problem peacefully and satisfactorily for both the Government men and the Indians.

While he was away, the Indians at the riverforks took matters into their own hands and stampeded. When he returned he saw a strange scene at the location where he had left the camp.

He wrote: Accompanied by Wm. Irving (Broncho Bill), we started back in an open buggy drawn by two small mules. We had provisions, bedding and ammunition. We made directly for the forks of the White Rivers where our Indians had camped for the winter.... Just before we had reached the top of a high hill which overlooked the valley, I noticed a fresh trail, indicating a large party of Indians had lately passed by. I told Bill to stop while I went on ahead on foot and looked over the hill. The sight that met my eyes was discouraging, to say the least. There stood the abandoned cabins and traders stores, and it looked as if all the coyotes of the plains had gathered there. Camp kettles and other camp equipment were scattered all over the ground.... A lone man came from one of the cabins.... We drove down to him. He had no information about the Spotted Tail Indians but he said our Indians (Ogalalla Sioux) had gone back to White Clay and that the traders in pursuance of my advice had followed them.... We (later) found some Jamaica ginger in the goods left behind, warmed up some water and made Jamaica ginger punch. This was very stimulating and if one gets enough of it he could, in his own mind, stand off all the reds on the plains. But it also produces the after-effect of a great depression so that the same fellow who got unusually brave under it's influence, when the effects wore off, would jump sunflowers getting into the brush, should he hear a war whoop!... After resting we proceeded.... to Spotted Tail or Rosebud Agency and later to (Red Cloud) Pine Ridge Agency.

Thus ended the part of the article relating Jordan's account of the Indian encampment.

**Col. Chas. P. Jordan's first wife, who passed away in 1877 at the Encampment site and is buried near there.**

Colonel Jordan also mentioned the capable help he had in moving 400 head of Government issue cattle. He wrote, "I employed a crew of herders and a chief herder, Stephen F. Estes, who had an Indian wife. He was one who I knew to be absolutely reliable, a man of considerable culture and attainments, and a cousin of J. Fenimore Cooper, the author."

It was this Estes who built a log house in 1880, one of the first in that area north of the Big White River, which later housed the first Westover post office. (See Estes story.)

Mrs. Katheryne Miller Harris tells me that her late father, Dr. Wm. J. Miller, homesteaded near Westover in the early 1900s. For a while he was the only physician in an area bounded by Chamberlain, Fort Pierre, Rapid City and Rosebud. Somehow he also found time to work with a surveyor's crew. One dramatic event was the time diphtheria struck on a remote ranch and the nearest medicine was at Chamberlain. A cowboy volunteered to ride non-stop the 150 mile round-trip to obtain it, thus saving the child's life and probably preventing the spread of this dreaded disease. Of such was the courage and stamina of the pioneers in early Dakota days.

When the Indians were mostly settled at the agencies, the cattlemen came into western Dakota. This cattle kingdom reached from the Missouri River to the Black Hills. Prominent men formed cattle companies and leased large grazing districts. They drove up thousands of long-horned cattle from Texas to be fed out on the native grass and then sold to government beef contractors or else driven to the nearest railroad to be shipped to the market at Chicago.

One of the largest round-ups in western South Dakota took place in 1902. Several stories in this book (Yellow Robe, Schervem, Estes, H. E. Cattle Company and others) give complete details of round-ups so I won't repeat them here. However, a reporter in Bert Hall's book, "Round-up Years," describes the round-up of 1902 as having 16 round-up wagons, 350 cow-punchers and 4,000 saddle horses. As most of those old cattle outfits had from one to three thousand or so head of cattle, you can see why the round-up of 1902 was considered a big undertaking.

Men who took part in it formed an organization known as the "Cowboys of 1902." Members of this select group still meet annually in connection with the S. D. Stockgrowers and Cowbelles convention. Billy Shoun is the present Trail Boss.

### THE COWBOYS' REUNION

**Winifred Reutter**

Once again the cowboys gather
To retell their round-up tales.
Campfires flicker in the sunset
As they ride down memory trails.

Remembering mornings on the prairies;
Meadow larks heralding the sun.
All the broncs are feeling frisky
When the round-up's just begun.

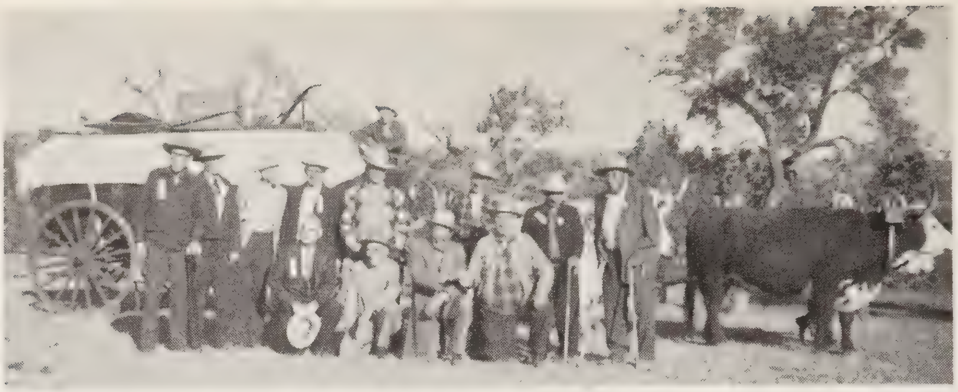
Crawl out of your bedroll early,
Smell the bacon sizzling hot.
It's keeping company on the campfire
With the old black coffee pot.

Herd those onery, long-horned cattle
Where the dusty trail wends;
(Dreaming how you'll spend your pay
If this round-up ever ends.)

Ride and tally, rope and brand;
Out in sunshine, rain or sleet.
Drive them to Westover Crossing
Where the two White Rivers meet.

The old cowboys well remember
All the work and all the joys,
When the round-ups in Dakota
Separated the men from the boys!

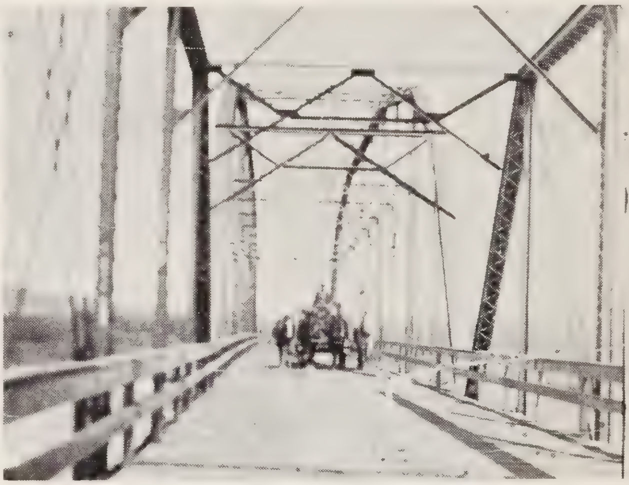
(Written in 1956 by request of the late Bert Hall for his book, "Round-up Years.")



**Some of the Cowboys of 1902 — the "Vanishing Trails Expedition," Sept. 24, 1961.** Bud Bowen on the wagon, driver of the Homestake Mine team and wagon. **Left to right, standing:** Elmer Humphrey (since deceased), Ed Humphrey, Gene McPherson, Jim Estes, Mac Trask, Al Hopkins, Charles (Babe) LaPlante, and Jim High Hawk. **In front, left to right:** Bob Cruickshank, Bill Phillips, W. P. (Billy) Shoun (who furnished these names) and Malachi Foley. (Picture by Winifred Reutter.)

During the round-up years a government fence was built along the north and west boundary lines of the Rosebud Reservation. (See Sandy, Liggett and other stories.) This fence was only in use a few years. It had guarded "toll" gates, one of them was in the Westover vicinity. There was a charge—for whites—to enter the government reserve at this time (if they came through these policed gates!). The government hired Indian police or scouts to ride patrol duty along these fence lines for a few years. After the cattle outfits moved out, pioneers began to homestead in Mellette County (April 15, 1912) the five strand, barbed wire fence was abandoned.

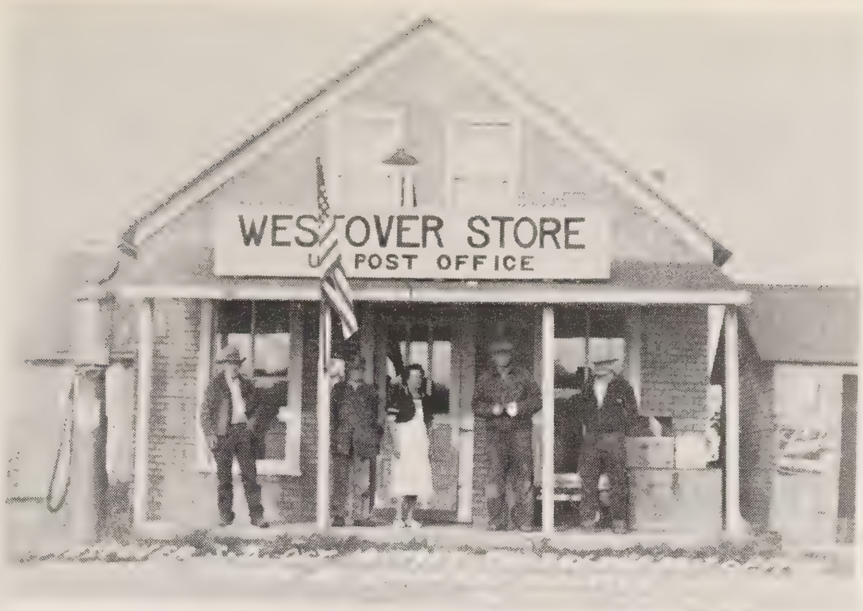
When the Rosebud Reservation was opened to homesteaders, the grazing leases of the big cattle outfits were terminated. Notice was given for all the cattle to be rounded up and moved off the reservation. So then the last big round-ups were held. One of these in 1909 was near Westover. There they had a store, good river crossing, fuel, shelter, grass and water so it was an ideal location for the big round-up job. The railroad had been built west through Murdo (then called Murdo McKenzie, after the big cattle baron) so the range cattle were tallied across the Big White River and driven north to the Murdo stockyards to be shipped to market or other pastures.



**Freighter crossing on new Westover Bridge, October, 1912.** (Picture from Sam Yellow Robe.)

In 1911, Mellette county was organized and the first county commissioners, Reuben Quick Bear, D. L. McLane and Joe Siegmund, saw the need for a better freighting road to the nearest railroad at Murdo. They, with the officials of Jones County (and helped out financially by the railroad company, I'm told), were instrumental in having a bridge constructed in 1912

**Paul Reutter stands among the ice cakes melting along Big White River. Ice jam began March 10, crested March 13. Picture taken by Winifred on March 27, 1955. He's pointing to the river channel over by the trees.**



The day the Westover Post Office was discontinued. Taken Oct. 18, 1957, a few minutes before the flag came down. Left to right: Elmer and Earl Gilliland, Mrs. Daisy L. Holmes (last postmistress), Paul Reutter, Joe Cash.

across the Big White River between the two counties. This was known as the Westover bridge. The Westover post office-store was again moved, near to the old Westover trail. This road was later designated as Highway 83. Many years later a Westover Community Hall and a unit of rural school buildings, consisting of a school house, coal shed, outbuildings and a barn, were built across the creek from the store.

There have been many ice-jams and floodings along the White River. One very spectacular ice-jam formed at Westover. When the rising waters finally took out the ice on March 5, 1955, acres of the river bottom land were flooded. When the water went down a little it left the land covered with huge ice cakes. These icy monsters covered part of the old Highway 83. Hundreds of sightseers came as close as they could, on both the Jones and Mellette County sides, to look at the ugly destruction the ice-jam had caused.

In 1957, Highway 83 was rerouted from White River to Murdo. By now this highway was designated as the Mexico to Canada route. This new black-topped road was several miles west of the old trail and so the usefulness of Westover as a Post Office came to an end. We drove up to see the last mail distributed. It was officially discontinued October 18, 1957. The last customers to get their mail were the Gilliland brothers, Earl and Elmer. They also happened to be the last patrons to fill in their "Notice of Change of Address" cards. Mrs. Daisy Holmes was the postmistress when the Westover post office closed.

Information from Wm. Robinson, State Historian of Pierre, gives the following as official postmasters of Westover and dates they were appointed as gathered from his records: Established June 30, 1891, Edgar C. Kelley; Nov. 15, 1892, Edward C. Powers; June 6, 1894, Russell B. Gage; Oct. 21, 1895, Frank P. Roll; Feb. 25, 1899, Rose R. Winter; Sept. 13, 1902, Frank McGrath; August 1906, John Rawhouser; Sept. 24, 1907, Frank J. Cummings; Sept. 13, 1912, Frank (Pat) McGrath; Dec. 31, 1913, discontinued until April 13, 1922, Henry Smith; 1937, Tom Wheeler; March 28, 1952, Daisy L. Holmes who served until Oct. 18, 1957. Gradually, business followed the new road until now the Westover Store, community hall and school buildings are all empty, idle and alone on the prairie.

In 1960, and in March again, we had another spring thaw that broke up the ice and the rivers went on the rampage. Huge ice cakes went grinding and crashing along in the icy currents. Again they piled up in the Westover area. This time, intead of spewing out over the bottomland, they piled up against the bridge until the whole steel structure (except for a short approach on the Mellette County side) was raised off of its moorings and swept down stream. Along with the destructive ice chunks, it was carried by the force of the dirty, raging waters about a quarter of a mile. There it was left by the swirling flood to sink into the sand of the river bed.

Dick Jones, who had homesteaded on the Jones County side of the river near there, said the bridge had come to its final rest not far from the original location of the old Westover Crossing. He also stated that in early days there was a sort of a cable car rigged up there across the Big White River. It was one of those "cross at your own risk" types like the one at the Thode ranch described elsewhere in this book. And so another old landmark that had served Indians, cowboys, homesteaders and ranchers, the old Westover bridge, was gone on March 22, 1960.

With the closing of the Post Office and the loss of the bridge. Westover was forgotten until January 1962 when Don Hight, a South Dakota cattleman decided to drive 1,800 head of his cattle to the Winner market, some 70 miles southeast of his ranch headquarters.

During the round-up, testing and various preparations before the big undertaking, Dick Kitchen of the state publicity department arrived to take a few pictures and stayed to go along and publicize the whole trip. So the story of the South Dakota cattle drive became nation-wide news headlines. Newspapers, radio and T. V. carried it all across the country. The weather had been pleasant, almost up to 60 degrees when they were getting ready, but South Dakota is known as th "land of infinite variety," and that also includes an

**Don Hight, who decided to drive 1800 head of his cattle across country to market, rather than truck them in there in the regular way. In doing so, he and his cowboys received nation-wide publicity.**
(Photo by Dick Kitchen, S. D. Highways)

infinite variety of weather. It turned colder each day and the fifth and final day of the drive was really bitter cold with a snow storm thrown in for good measure.

The cattle drive started at Don Hight's ranch (see map) in Jones County, crossed the Big White River (down east of the old ghost town of Westover) going south into Mellette County. Then they angled east and south across Mellette County and into Tripp County. When they crossed Highway 183 on Sunday afternoon the road was lined with spectators who, in spite of the chilly weather, had driven out to see the big herd cross the highway. They arrived in Winner from the north on January 8, 1962. It was storming that day and everybody was glad that the drive was completed safely.

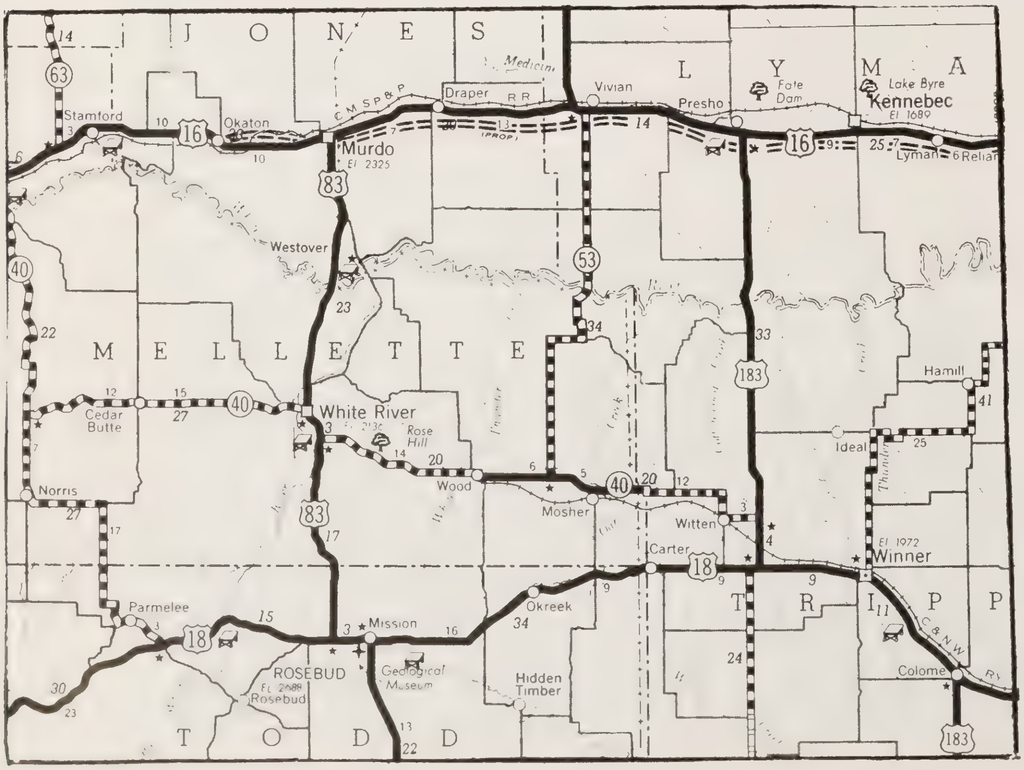
A special cattle sale was held January 11th and the large Winner Auction Sale pavilion was filled to capacity with buyers, spectators and also newsmen and photographers representing newspapers and magazines from all over the United States, who had come to Winner to get pictures and stories of the now-famous cattle drive.

Don Hight was born in White River, and five of the nine men who were on the cattle drive live in Mellette County. Lester Ham drove the team hitched to the rackload of hay that went ahead to lead the cattle. The other White River cowboys were Cliff (Smokey) Jensen, Ray Hight, Don Strain and Alvin Stromer. On the job also were Don Bryan, Murdo; Charles (Chick) Abourezk, Mission; Earl Sever, Winner; and Dick Kitchen, Pierre. Dan Hight, 10 years old (Don Hight's son), was the courageous young horse wrangler. Four other young cowboys, Willard and Dennis Hurst, ages 15 and 16, and Dennis and Kenneth Kauer, 16 and 10, also helped out during some of the trip.

South central South Dakota is primarily a cattle country with many large cattle herds. Local cattle drives from winter to summer pastures, etc., are not uncommon. But Don Hight's drive was one of the largest herds driven in one bunch for such a distance in recent years. Everybody likes a Western Story and this was a good one. Just enough cold weather to be hazardous and with real live cowboys in action trailing 1,800 head of cattle, the drive made thrilling listening, viewing and reading.

Best of all, in true good story form, they overcame all hardships and difficulties and arrived safely. The cattle sold well, so it ended—a truly successful South Dakota Cattle Drive.

**Portion of 1961 South Dakota Map, Courtesy of Don Hipschman and S. D. Highway Dept.**



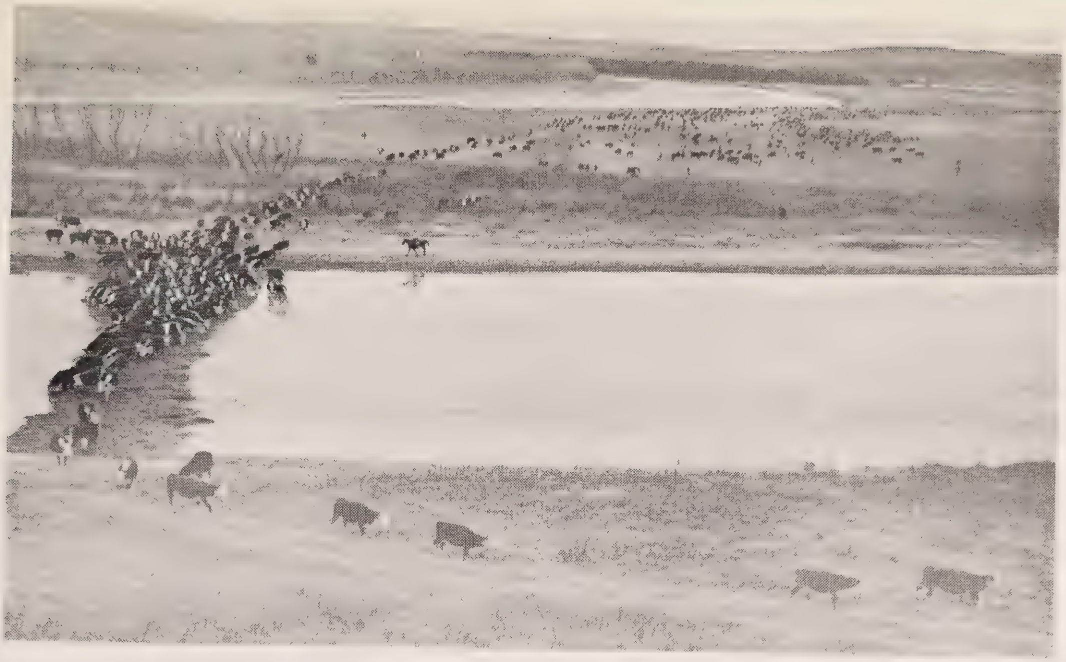
Don Hight's ranch buildings are south of Murdo, in Jones County on Highway 83, near the number 83.

The darker line curving south and east from there shows the location of old Highway 83. Notice in Mellette County it follows the Little White River, which flows northward across that county.

Westover Post Office was about where that star is on this map and the Westover Bridge spanned the Big White River there between Jones and Mellette Counties.

The Indian encampment was on the river bottom lands at the forks of the rivers, about where that figure 23 is.

South Dakota's secondary Old West Trails Route follows Highway 16 (from left) to Murdo, down 83 to 18 and back west.



**Don Hight's cattle, first morning of the drive. Crossing the Big White River from Jones into Mellette County.**

## SOUTH DAKOTA CATTLE DRIVE OF JANUARY 1962

South Dakota prairies echoed
With the cowboys' cattle call,
As the Cattle Drive got started—
Eighteen hundred head in all.

Wake up, Westover; old ghost town,
Hear the hoofbeats passing by;
See the big herd trail the wagon
Beneath the stormy winter sky.

Years ago, round-ups were held here;
Texas longhorns came to graze
On the Rosebud Reservation
Before the homesteading days.

Drive on, drive on to Winner
Through storm and snow and cold;
Drive them slowly to the market
Like the cattlemen of old!

Five days, the cattle plodded—
The last, the worst for chill;
But the cowboys did their work,
As Dakota cowboys always will.

Don Hight's cattle drive is over,
The dogies now are sold;
But the story of the cattle drive
Will often be re-told.

By Winifred Reutter
White River, South Dakota

**A sea of beef—on the South Dakota rangeland. Don Hight's cattle enroute to market.**
(Photos on this page by Dick Kitchen, S. D. Highways)

# *Thanks*

Thanks to all who contributed material for this book, "Early Dakota Days," and also to our first book, "Mellette County Memories." We appreciate all of our friends who helped and encouraged us in any way. It takes many willing workers to complete a book like this one. You all have had a part in making this book what it is and I thank you.

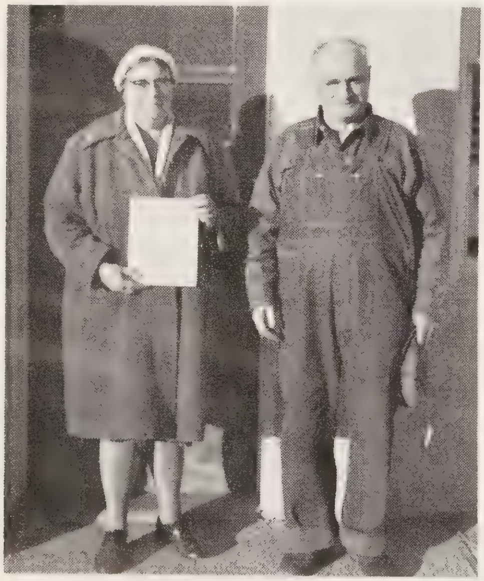
Especially do I thank the Lord for His ever present help and guidance, for without His help we could accomplish nothing.

Thanks also to the Argus Printers, Stickney, S. Dak., for their cooperation and fine job of printing. Picture credits go to O'Neill Photo Company, State Highway Department, and many others.

This is not presented as a history or text book, but it is a collection of true, western, pioneer stories and pictures directly from the early settlers of South Dakota. There may be some errors and conflicting dates but we all did our best to remember and record events that happened a long, long time ago. So the stories on the preceding pages are only as accurate as the memories of the story-tellers. These old pioneer stories are like the wonderful stories that you heard when you were a little child and climbed upon your grandad's (or grandma's) knee and said, "Tell me a story about the days when you were little, like me."

I compiled this book as a tribute to the memory of my parents who were Mellette County homesteaders, and all the other courageous pioneers of early Dakota days.

WINIFRED REUTTER
White River, South Dakota



*We thank you for buying this book.*
*Paul and Winifred Reutter*
(Picture by Ruth Billups)

(Printed by Argus Printers, Stickney, S. D. - 1962)